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THE RUMOR OF DR. JOHNSON'S CONVERSION

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WHEN DR. JOHNSON DIED, on December 13, 1784, a score of writers began producing their biographies, memoirs, anecdotes, and eulogies to commemorate the great man. One of these authors was the poet William Cowper. Although he had never met the distinguished critic, he was well acquainted with his reputation, as he reveals in his "Epitaph on Dr. Johnson." Quite apart from its merits, the poem is of particular interest because of a curious allusion in it. The lines that Cowper composed about a month after Johnson's death are these:

Here Johnson lies—a sage by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim—grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from heav'n possess'd,
And faith at last—alone worth all the rest.
Oh man, immortal by a double prize!
By Fame on earth—by Glory in the skies!

What did Cowper mean by "faith at last?" Had not Dr. Johnson, during the whole course of his life, been a stalwart Christian? Cowper would have answered, "No." To the poet, steeped in the principles of the Evangelical revival, "faith" implied something more than the mere acceptance of Christian beliefs. Faith was a strong conviction, generally arrived at through a dramatically intense experience, that the Atonement of Christ assured one of salvation. When Cowper wrote his poem, he was under the impression that Johnson did possess this form of saving faith before he died, but that redeeming faith had come to him only in the last months of life, upon his conversion to Evangelical principles.

If Cowper, virtually a recluse in the little town of Olney, had received such information, then various persons must have heard the same story. Furthermore, the rumor did not quickly vanish. It con-

tinued to circulate for many years after Johnson was interred in Westminster Abbey. The report seems to have been spread chiefly by the Evangelicals, who were naturally eager to claim Johnson as one of their adherents. How widely the rumor was circulated by word of mouth there is no way of telling, but the various written reports on the subject indicate that it must have been brought to the attention of thousands of readers. For instance, the *Christian Observer*, a popular Evangelical magazine, printed three different articles in the years 1827 and 1828 on Johnson's conversion. Still another story to the same effect appeared a few years later when the editor of the correspondence of Hannah More published a letter that purported to be a circumstantial account of Johnson's adoption of Evangelical views.

Although John Wilson Croker and other nineteenth century writers stoutly denied that there was any basis for the rumor, the Evangelicals believed they had good evidence, if not proof, for their contentions. Furthermore, advocates for the view that Johnson died a convert still exist. In a recently published essay on "The Religion of Dr. Johnson," for instance, the Reverend W. T. Cairns asserts that there is considerable support for the opinion that Johnson was influenced by the great eighteenth century religious revival. Thus the whole question has been reopened. In this paper my purpose will be to determine what circumstances gave rise to the rumor, through what channels it circulated, and, finally, what evidence, if any, exists for the Evangelical assertions.

Cowper's assumption that Johnson died a convert was based on information he had received in the spring of 1784. His informant was John Newton, the well-known Evangelical clergyman, who, after a long residence at Olney, had become rector of St. Mary Woolnoth Church, London. We do not have Newton's letter, but Cowper's reply, dated May 10, 1784, clearly shows whence he got his impression:

We rejoice in the account you give us of Dr. Johnson. His conversion will indeed be a singular proof of the omnipotence of Grace; and the more singular, the more decided. The world will set his age against his wisdom, and comfort itself with the thought that he must be superannuated. Perhaps, therefore, in order to refute the slander and do honour to the cause to which he becomes a convert, he could not do better than devote his great abilities, and a considerable part of the remainder of his years to the production of some important work not immediately connected with the interests of religion. He would thus give proof that a man of profound learning, and the

best sense, may become a child without being a fool; and that to embrace the gospel is no evidence either of enthusiasm, infirmity, or insanity.¹

In writing thus Cowper had in mind the contempt of the upper classes for the Methodists and other Evangelical groups. No doubt he recalled the amazement and scorn of many of his fashionable friends when he himself had been converted. Hence his first thought was of the public reaction to the news that the great doctor had become a disciple of the religious revival. His concern upon this score is significant, because it shows that Cowper assumed that Johnson had not only been converted, but that he had become a professor of Evangelical faith. Moreover, since Cowper had obtained his information from Newton, presumably the clergyman was also under the impression that Johnson had adopted Evangelical beliefs.

Newton had apparently picked up the rumor in the circle of his London friends. It may, of course, have come to him at third or fourth hand; more likely, however, he received the report directly from an acquaintance of Johnson. When Newton arrived in London in 1780, he had got to know various other Evangelical clergymen. With one of these, a Moravian named Benjamin Latrobe, he was on terms of intimacy. They were both members of a little Evangelical group known as the Eclectic Society, and they saw each other frequently.² It was Latrobe, very likely, who gave Newton the impression that Johnson had become a convert, for the Moravian clergyman was virtually the only member of Newton's Evangelical circle who knew Johnson, and, as we shall see, he had apparently transmitted other information about the doctor to Newton.

Although there is no account of Latrobe in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he was a fairly prominent person. He had written and translated various religious works, and he was the director of all Moravian establishments in England. Apparently he had become acquainted with Johnson only a few years before the latter's death. Boswell does not describe the circumstances of their acquaintance. He merely observes that, though Johnson was a staunch Church of England man, he was on friendly terms with various divines of other sects, and adds, "Let me particularly name the late Mr. Latrobe and Mr.

1. Wright, Thomas. *Correspondence of William Cowper* (New York, 1904), II, 205.

2. Bull, Josiah, *John Newton* (London, 1868), p. 263.

Hutton of the Moravian profession."³ The only other reference to Latrobe by Johnson's biographers is contained in John Hoole's account of the doctor's death. On Friday, December 10, just three days before his friend died, Hoole wrote in his diary, "Called about eleven in the morning; saw Mr. Latrobe there: neither of us saw the Doctor, as we understood he wished not to be visited that day."⁴ Although Latrobe did not see him on this occasion, there were many other days when he did. In fact, he was probably much better acquainted with Johnson than Boswell intimates.

Many years later a son of Latrobe attested that his father knew Dr. Johnson well.⁵ To this statement Christian Ignatius Latrobe, who, like his father, was a Moravian clergyman, added some interesting information. Unfortunately, as he admitted, he had no documents to support his contentions, and his memory, more than forty years after the deaths of both Johnson and the elder Latrobe, was not completely trustworthy regarding details. In the course of his narrative, which he wrote for the *Christian Observer*, he made a few remarks that other sources contradict, and for these errors John Wilson Croker, editor of *Boswell's Johnson*, took him severely to task. Croker virtually repudiated all of his testimony, but Latrobe's account should not be totally disregarded. Though he was confused on dates and other details, his memory was probably perfectly clear regarding the relationship that existed between his father and Doctor Johnson.⁶

3. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. by G. B. Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), IV, 410.

4. *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ed. by G. B. Hill (New York, 1897), II, 158.

5. Latrobe, C. I., "The Last Hours of Dr. Johnson," *Christian Observer*, XXVIII (January, 1828), 32.

6. Towards the end of his essay C. I. Latrobe wrote that when Johnson was dying he sent a messenger every day to Latrobe's house to ask the clergyman to attend him. The elder Latrobe, who had been away, finally returned and hastened to visit Johnson. According to this account, the doctor was then speechless, but the Moravian gave him solace, which the dying man gratefully acknowledged by a pressure of the hand. The next morning, according to C. I. Latrobe, Johnson died (*Ibid.*, p. 33).

Croker, who strongly resented the allegation that Johnson died a convert, pointed out various errors in the account of C. I. Latrobe. Johnson was not speechless at the end, he observed. Furthermore he died, not in the morning, but at night. He also noted that, according to John Hoole's account, the elder Latrobe had called on Johnson three days before he died, and not on the day immediately preceeding death. *Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. by J. W. Croker (New York, 1842), II, 438, note.

Having read a discussion of Dr. Johnson's religion by the Reverend S. C. Wilks, the younger Latrobe wrote:

I wish before the tradition is lost, most fully to corroborate his statements, on the testimony of my late reverend father, who knew Dr. Johnson intimately, and always spoke of him as having become truly, before his death, "a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Indeed, for several years my father had observed in him, not only an increasing *knowledge* of the way of salvation, freely through the merits and atonement of the Redeemer, a subject on which he delighted to hear my honoured parent expatiate in his truly affectionate and pastoral manner, but also a growing humility and piety, which showed that he had himself personally "laid hold of this hope set before him in the Gospel," and found pardon and peace in his soul.

I regret that I did not collect at the time any memoranda of my father's frequent interviews with this eminent man, as they would have served to show that "the great Dr. Johnson," as he was emphatically called, did not, in his closing years, live, and certainly did not die, a formalist or a pharisee, trusting either wholly or in part to his own merits: but that his "conversion" to God, to use his own expression, though "late"—yet not so late, I feel assured, as his last illness—was true, and that he died a penitent sinner at the foot of that cross from which no sincere penitent was ever rejected.⁷

However doubtful one may be of the assertion here made of Johnson's conversion, C. I. Latrobe's observations go far to establish two related points. First, his father did know Johnson well. Secondly, although the elder Latrobe may have been mistaken, he apparently believed that some time before his last illness Johnson had become a convert to the principle of justification by faith alone. Thus Latrobe could very conceivably have passed on this information to his friend Newton. That he did give Newton the information is only a theory, of course, but the theory gains support from materials found in the correspondence of Cowper. When the poet published his first volume of verse, in 1782, Newton suggested presenting a copy to Johnson and soliciting his opinion. To this plan Cowper agreed, but nothing came of the matter until long after the book had appeared, probably because Newton awaited to find someone personally acquainted with Johnson to approach him on the subject. Newton must have finally

7. C. I. Latrobe, *op. cit.* Two months after Latrobe's article appeared in the *Christian Observer* an anonymous contributor wrote that an old clergyman who had known the elder Latrobe had avouched that an "extraordinary and truly Christian" revolution had taken place in Johnson's religious views before he died. *Christian Observer*, xxviii (March, 1828), 177 f.).

succeeded in his plan, for on May 22, 1784, Cowper wrote him, "I am glad to have received at last an account of Dr. Johnson's favourable opinion of my book." He goes on to say that he is enclosing a note of acknowledgment to Johnson and asks that it be conveyed to the critic "through the hands of Mr. Latrobe," whom he also wished to thank for his "patronage of the volume."⁸ This letter indicates that Latrobe had probably brought the verse to Johnson's attention, particularly since the poet names him as the intermediary to relay his note of gratitude. Cowper's letter on this subject, moreover, was written less than two weeks after the one in which he refers to Johnson's conversion. Thus it appears probable that when Newton passed on information about Johnson to Cowper, his own informant was Benjamin Latrobe, who apparently was seeing the great critic frequently in the spring of 1784.

If Latrobe was responsible for originating the rumor of Johnson's conversion, the next question is: What led the Moravian clergyman to entertain such a belief? Again, because of the lack of specific evidence, we must reason from inference, and at best we can only offer a theory.

First, it will be well to establish the approximate time when the rumor associated with Latrobe originated. The younger Latrobe remarked that though the conversion of Johnson was "late," he was sure that it had occurred before his last illness. Furthermore, the discussion of the subject in Cowper's letter of May 10, 1784, shows that the report was circulating at least as early as the spring before Johnson died. We also know, chiefly from the *Life* by Hawkins, that Johnson's religious ardor was particularly strong at this time. Although he had always been a firm Christian, when his suffering increased and he realized that death was near, he became especially devout. According to Sir John Hawkins, his fervor was particularly strengthened by an experience he had had the previous winter. This experience bears retelling, since Johnson's expressed reaction to it very likely led Latrobe to believe that he had been converted.

At Johnson's request, Hawkins had paid the aging man a visit. When he called, Sir John found his old friend dejected and brooding on the prospect of death. He spoke frankly of his fear of departing this life, saying that "he dreaded to meet his Saviour." To encourage him Hawkins reminded him of the many services he had rendered

8. Wright, *op. cit.*, II, 206.

Christianity, both by the example of his life and by his writings. But Johnson refused to be so easily consoled. In self-accusing terms he remarked that "he had written as a philosopher but had not lived like one." He talked further on the subject and ended by exclaiming, "Shall I, who have been the teacher of others, myself be a castaway?"⁹

During the course of the conversation, he told Hawkins that he intended "to devote the whole of the next day to fasting, humiliation, and such other devotional exercises as became a man in his situation." When Hawkins next visited him, two days later, he discovered a remarkable change. Instead of a depressed and unhappy man, he now found Johnson serene and at peace with himself. He told Hawkins that, according to his resolution, he had on the previous day shut himself up and had given orders to his servant Frank to admit no one. Then, while performing his religious observances, Hawkins reports, "he found himself relieved from that disorder which had been growing on him, and was become very oppressing, the dropsy, by a gradual evacuation of water to the amount of twenty pints, a like instance whereof he had never before experienced, and asked me what I thought of it."¹⁰

Hawkins, feeling that the circumstances were indeed unusual, replied that it might be presumptuous to say his remarkable recovery was owing to a miracle, but "that the safe opinion was that he had not in vain humbled himself before his Maker." With this view Johnson heartily concurred. He was convinced that his sudden relief could be attributed only to a special act of mercy, and while Hawkins discussed the subject with him, he cried out several times, "It is wonderful, very wonderful."¹¹

Because his temporary recovery from dropsy seemed so remarkable, Johnson undoubtedly related the circumstances of it to various friends and acquaintances. How many he told we do not know, but Boswell had the story from him soon after his arrival in London on May 5, 1784, for what was to be his last visit with his admired friend. The biographer remarks that he found Johnson "greatly recovered" and as ready to converse as ever. When they were alone, Johnson almost immediately told him about his unusual experiences of the previous win-

9. Hawkins, John, *Life of Samuel Johnson* (London, 1787), pp. 563 f.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 564 f.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 565.

ter. Boswell, whose account does not differ materially from that of Hawkins, describes the conversation thus:

One morning afterwards, when I found him alone, he communicated to me, with solemn earnestness, a very remarkable circumstance which had happened in the course of his illness, when he was much distressed by the dropsy. He had shut himself up, and employed a day in particular exercises of religion,—fasting, humiliation, and prayer. On a sudden he obtained extraordinary relief, for which he looked up to Heaven with grateful devotion. He made no direct inference from this fact; but from his manner of telling it, I could perceive that it appeared to him as something more than an incident in the common course of events. For my own part, I have no difficulty to avow that cast of thinking, which by many modern pretenders to wisdom, is called *superstitious*. But here I think even men of dry rationality may believe, that there was an intermediate interposition of divine Providence, and that 'the fervent prayer of this righteous man' availed.¹²

The deep impression the experience made on Johnson is also indicated in a prayer he composed about this time. In the prayer, dated April 11, 1784, he said, "Enable me, O Lord, to glorify thee for that knowledge of my Corruption, and that sense of thy wrath, which my deasease and weakness, and danger awakened in my mind."¹³ Obviously, then, Johnson's religious fervor was particularly strong in the spring of 1784. From what he told Hawkins and Boswell, it is clear that he regarded his sudden recovery from the dropsy as no less than a divine dispensation, and believing that he had been especially favored by this act of mercy, he felt both grateful and humble.

It will be noted that Johnson was not alone in thinking that his sudden recovery was divinely ordained. When he told Hawkins about it, Sir John expressed the view that his relief had come as a response to his devotional exercises. Boswell was equally convinced that the experience was of a supernatural nature and did not hesitate to call it "an intermediate interposition of divine Providence." If such was the reaction of an often sceptical layman, how would a pious clergyman be likely to view the experience? If Johnson described his recovery to Latrobe, and very likely he did, the Moravian minister would no doubt have gone a step further than Boswell in his interpretation. He would probably have seen that the apparent act of divine mercy had awakened Johnson's reflections upon the mysteries of faith. No doubt he

12. Hill-Powell, *op. cit.*, IV, 271 f.

13. *Ibid.*, 272, note 1.

also would have observed that the incident had strengthened the aged doctor's hopes for salvation, and since the distinction between faith and hope is often subtle, he may have concluded that the sudden awakening of conscience and the marked piety constituted something akin to Evangelical conversion.

There were several stages through which the typical Evangelical convert passed before the process was complete. Through some of these steps one might pass simultaneously, to be sure, but the general pattern was this: (1) consciousness of one's sins; (2) turning to God; (3) an awakening, often by means of an intensely dramatic experience, to a sense of God's mercy; (4) a profound realization of the significance of the Atonement; (5) belief in the principle that man is saved by faith alone; and, finally, (6) assurance of one's own salvation. Even if Johnson revealed no more to Latrobe than he did to Boswell and Hawkins, the Moravian clergyman might have been led to think that his friend had passed through several stages of the process of conversion. As we know from Hawkins, Johnson had first become concerned about his sinfulness. As a result he had turned to God, shutting himself up and performing religious devotions. In answer to his prayers, seemingly, he had suddenly been relieved of the dropsy, an experience that aroused in him a strong sense of God's mercy. Latrobe, having observed a similar progression in various converts, may have concluded that Johnson was well on the road to Evangelical sainthood, far enough, perhaps, to justify mentioning his religious experience to a few discreet friends. Under these circumstances the Moravian may have spoken to Newton on the subject, and Newton, rejoicing in the good news, probably passed the report on to Cowper.

A second and quite different story of the conversion appeared in 1834, when William Roberts published a letter about Johnson in his ill-edited and badly organized *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More*. The letter has since become rather well known through its republication in G. B. Hill's *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, but Hill makes no comment on it, and Roberts indicates neither the date of the letter, its author, nor the person to whom it was addressed. Apparently, it came into Hannah More's possession after it had been passed around in Evangelical circles, for it is credited to the Reverend J. Sanger and supposedly addressed to Lady Lifford, an Evan-

gelical living in Ireland.¹⁴ Although one is inclined to be sceptical of the whole account given in this letter, it forms an important part in the legend of Johnson's conversion. It seems worthwhile therefore to reproduce a considerable part of the text before we proceed to discuss it.

My Dear Friend,

I ought to apologize for delaying so long to gratify your wishes and fulfill my promise, by committing to paper a conversation which I had with the late Rev. Mr. Storry, of Colchester, respecting Dr. Johnson. I will now, however, proceed at once to record, to the best of my recollection, the substance of our discourse.

We were riding together near Colchester, when I asked Mr. Storry whether he had ever heard that Dr. Johnson expressed great dissatisfaction with himself on the approach of death, and that in reply to friends who, in order to comfort him, spoke of his writings in defence of virtue and religion, he had said, "admitting all you urge to be true, how can I tell when I have done enough?"

Mr. S. assured me that what I had just mentioned was perfectly correct; and then added the following interesting particulars.

Dr. Johnson, said he, did feel as you describe, and was not to be comforted by the ordinary topics of consolation which were addressed to him. In consequence he desired to see a clergyman, and particularly described the views and character of the person whom he wished to consult. After some consideration a Mr. Winstanley was named, and the Dr. requested Sir John Hawkins to write a note in his name, requesting Mr. W.'s attendance as a minister.

Mr. W., who was in a very weak state of health, was quite overpowered by receiving the note, and felt appalled by the very thought of encountering the talents and learning of Dr. Johnson. In his embarrassment he went to his friend Colonel Pownall, and told him what had happened, asking, at the same time, for his advice how to act. The Colonel who was a very pious man, urged him immediately to follow what appeared to be a remarkable leading of Providence, and for the time argued his friend out of his nervous apprehension: but after he left Colonel Pownall, Mr. W.'s fears returned in so great a degree as to prevail upon him to abandon the thought of a personal interview with the Dr. He determined in consequence to write him a letter: that letter I think Mr. Storry said he had seen,—at least a copy of it, and part of it he repeated to me as follows:—

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the honour of your note, and am very sorry that the state of my health prevents my compliance with your request: but my nerves are so shattered that I feel as if I should be quite confounded by your

14. Cairns, W. T., *The Religion of Dr. Johnson and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1946), p. 17.

presence, and instead of promoting, should only injure the cause in which you desire my aid. Permit me therefore to write what I should wish to say were I present. I can easily conceive what would be the subjects of your inquiry. I can conceive that the views of yourself have changed with your condition, and that on the near approach of death, what you once considered mere peccadillos have risen into mountains of guilt, while your best actions have dwindled into nothing. On whichever side you look you see only positive transgressions or defective obedience; and hence, in self-despair, are eagerly inquiring, "What shall I do to be saved?" I say to you, in the language of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God!" etc. etc.

When Sir John Hawkins came to this part of Mr. W.'s letter, the Dr. interrupted him, anxiously asking, "*Does he say so?* Read it again! Sir John." Sir John complied: upon which the Dr. said, "I must see that man; write again to him." A second note was accordingly sent: but even this repeated solicitation could not prevail over Mr. Winstanley's fears. He was led, however, by it to write again to the Doctor, renewing and enlarging upon the subject of his first letter; and these communications, together with the conversation of the late Mr. Latrobe, who was a particular friend of Dr. Johnson, appear to have been blessed by God in bringing this great man to the renunciation of self, and a simple reliance on Jesus as his Saviour. . . .¹⁵

The report of Johnson's conversion given in this letter seems to be almost entirely different from the one that Cowper probably heard from Newton. Yet the letter does not contradict the theory that Johnson's pious reaction to his recovery from the dropsy led to a rumor of his conversion. It will be noted that, while Winstanley is here chiefly credited with effecting Johnson's religious awakening, the Reverend Mr. Latrobe is also mentioned in that connection. As we shall see, the letter was written at least thirty years after the death of Johnson. During that time a rumor passing from mouth to mouth would undoubtedly undergo various changes. Furthermore, there would be a good opportunity for different rumors to be blended. Apparently this letter represents just such a blending of what were originally two different rumors, one concerned with the influence of Winstanley on Johnson, and the second with the influence of Latrobe on him.

When the Reverend Mr. Sanger heard the Winstanley story, it had no doubt already passed through a long chain of purveyors. Obviously it is impossible to identify all the links in the chain, but one can identify the various persons mentioned in the letter to Lady Lifford. Sanger remarks that he got his information from the Reverend Mr. Storry while riding

15. *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, II, 203-5.

with that gentleman near Colchester. The man referred to must have been the Reverend R. Storry, who, according to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, died in 1814, aged sixty-two, after serving for thirty-three years as Vicar of St. Peter's in Colchester.¹⁶ Although a rather obscure clergyman, he knew various prominent Evangelicals. Presumably he was one himself, since he was appointed to his living by John Thornton, a wealthy layman who had purchased various advowsons and bestowed them on preachers of the revival. Storry also knew William Wilberforce, and a chief source of information about the clergyman is a letter he wrote to this wealthy Evangelical convert. From this letter it appears that Wilberforce succeeded Thornton as his patron, for Storry acknowledges an annual gift of ten pounds from the wealthy member of parliament.¹⁷

The identification of Storry also helps to date the letter written to Lady Lifford. Sanger refers to "the late Mr. Storry," and since the clergyman died in March, 1814,¹⁸ the letter must have been written some time though probably not long after that date. Thus the Winstanley rumor was being circulated at least thirty years after the death of Johnson.

Colonel Pownall, who is also mentioned in the letter, is easily identified as the well-known antiquarian and the governor at different times of various American colonies. There is a detailed account of Thomas Pownall in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Finally, there is the mysterious Mr. Winstanley—apparently the Reverend Thomas Winstanley. Born in Wigan, Lancashire, about 1715, he matriculated at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1734, and received a B.A. degree in 1737. After holding various clerical offices, including the rectorship of St. Matthew, Friday Street, London, he was appointed Rector of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East in 1771 and, at the same time, became a Reader in Divinity at St. Paul's. He died in February, 1789, aged seventy-four.¹⁹ Thus he would have been nearly seventy in the last year of Johnson's life and might very well have been in poor health, as Sanger's letter indicates.

16. *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXXIV (March, 1814), 302.

17. *Correspondence of William Wilberforce*, ed. by R. I. and Samuel Wilberforce (Philadelphia, 1841), II, 43-45.

18. *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXXIV (March, 1814), 302.

19. Longden, Henry I., *Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy from 1500* (Northampton, 1943), xv, 147. The Winstanley described above should not be confused with the more famous Reverend Thomas Winstanley, 1749-1823.

Boswell never mentions the clergyman in his *Life of Johnson*, but since Winstanley was a Reader in Divinity at St. Paul's, he must have been the preacher Boswell heard on Easterday, 1776. "I breakfasted at the Chapter Coffeehouse," he wrote, "then went to St. Paul's, heard an excellent discourse by Mr. Winstanley, and was solemnly devout."²⁰ A few years later, on April 15, 1781, Boswell heard the clergyman preach a second time.²¹

Merely to identify the various persons mentioned in the letter does not prove that its contentions are trustworthy, although the identifications may lend the account a certain verisimilitude. Obviously the letter raises many questions. Through what channels did the obscure Mr. Storry hear the report? Why should Johnson have sought religious advice from Winstanley, who was unknown to him, when he could easily have called upon one of his orthodox or Evangelical acquaintances among the clergy? Finally, if there is any truth in the tale, why did neither Boswell nor Hawkins, who allegedly sent for Winstanley, never mention the man in connection with Johnson? Our inability to answer these questions only serves to strengthen the impression that the whole account is mythical. Nevertheless, the fact that all the persons mentioned were real characters who conceivably could have played the parts assigned to them makes one hesitate to brand the report as a clear fabrication. Perhaps it contains some small measure of truth to which exaggerations and spurious incidents were added.

The search for origins of the rumor of Dr. Johnson's conversion leads next to a consideration of the biographical accounts of his death. Virtually all of these reveal that, in his last few weeks, Johnson seemed to dwell upon religion almost to the exclusion of other subjects. Boswell tells us that when Sir Joshua Reynolds visited him, the dying man made him promise that he would faithfully read the Bible and abstain from work on Sunday.²² He interrupted the ministrations of his friend, Dr. Brocklesby, to urge upon him the importance of faith and to encourage him to read the sermons of Dr. Clarke.²³ John Nichols reports that, when he parted for the last time from his old friend, Johnson ad-

20. *Private Papers of James Boswell*, ed. by Geoffrey Scott and F. A. Pottle (privately printed, 1934), xi, 231.

21. *Ibid.*, xiv, 197.

22. Hill-Powell, *op. cit.*, iv, 413 f.

23. *Ibid.*, 416.

monished him to observe the Sabbath and to take care of his salvation.²⁴ To Fanny Burney, who saw him a few weeks before he died, he said, "Remember me in your prayers." Just two days before death occurred, her father, Dr. Burney, paid him a visit. Although very ill by this time, Johnson prayed while Burney was there and asked him to "tell Fanny to pray for me."²⁵

In his narrative of Johnson's last days, John Hoole remarks that the dying man also entreated him to kneel by his bedside and pray with him. A few weeks before he died, according to Hoole, he spoke of having Mrs. Hall, Wesley's sister, come and stay at his house, presumably to offer him religious counsel.²⁶ Hawkins observes that, while helping Johnson prepare his will, he asked the doctor if he cared to make any introductory declaration of faith. In reply Johnson seized a pen and wrote, with particular emphasis on the Atonement, "I humbly commit to the infinite and eternal goodness of Almighty God my soul polluted with many sins; but, as I hope, purified by repentance, and redeemed, as I trust, by the death of Jesus Christ."²⁷

These and various other reports of Johnson's last weeks attest to his extreme piety. Almost anyone who read the biographers would conclude that he died a sincere and humble Christian. But certain persons believed they detected something more than mere piety in Johnson's parting remarks. His admonitions to his friends to observe the Sabbath, his exhortations to read the Bible and other religious works, and his references to the Atonement would especially impress an Evangelical, for the emphasis on these points was strictly in accord with the teachings of the revival. Furthermore, the phrasing of some of his deathbed utterances seemed to have a special significance when interpreted in the language of the Evangelical lexicon. Thus, although neither Boswell nor Hawkins so much as hinted that Johnson died a convert, an eager advocate of the revival might reach that conclusion from reading them.

That the Evangelicals did in some instances arrive at that conclusion from reading the biographers is illustrated by the lengthy discussion of Johnson's final religious views in the Reverend S. C. Wilks' "True and False Repose in Death." In this essay, which appeared in the *Christian*

24. *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, II, 412 f.

25. *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*, ed. by Charlotte Barrett (London, n.d.), I, 577, 583.

26. *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, II, 146 f.

27. Hawkins, *op. cit.*, p. 580.

Observer for 1827, the Evangelical clergyman observes that, though the various biographers of Johnson had "industriously exerted themselves to palliate" the facts, a careful reading of their works shows that Johnson's religious views did undergo a change before he died. Drawing chiefly upon the *Life* by Hawkins, Wilks argues that Johnson was ardently seeking religious enlightenment during the last year of his life. When he approached his friends on the subject, they tried to subdue his fears by reminding him of his various good deeds, but Johnson rejected these attempts to comfort him, having by this time realized that good works could not avail for salvation. What he was searching for was redeeming faith, and largely through his own reflections and devotions he eventually found it.²⁸ As a result, Wilks concludes, he was able to die in that true state of repose, enjoyed only by a person reconciled with God and assured of salvation. If Johnson had lived longer, the change in his religious views would have been quite discernable, according to Wilks, who writes:

Had Johnson survived this period of his decisive 'conversion,' we might have expected to have seen throughout his conduct that he had indeed become 'a new creature in Jesus Christ.' His respect for religion and his outward excellence of character could not perhaps have admitted of much visible change for the better, but in heavenly-mindedness, in love and zeal for the souls of men, in deadness to the world and to fame, in the choice of books and companions, and in the exhibition of those spiritual graces which belong peculiarly to the Christian character, we might, and must, have beheld a marked improvement. Instead of being merely the Seneca of the English nation, he might possibly have become its St. Paul.²⁹

In support of his conviction that Johnson died possessed of Evangelical faith, Wilks draws upon the biographers for two pieces of evidence that he deems conclusive. From Boswell he takes the following statement credited by the biographer to Dr. Brocklesby, the friend and physician who attended Johnson in his last days:

For some time before his death, all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and *propitiation* of Jesus Christ.

He talked often to me about the necessity of faith in the *sacrifice* of Jesus, as necessary beyond all good works whatever, for the salvation of mankind.³⁰

28. *Christian Observer*, xxvii (October, 1827), 586 ff.

29. *Ibid.*, xxvii (November, 1827), 649.

30. Hill-Powell, *op. cit.*, iv, 416.

The second half of this statement seems particularly significant to the Reverend Mr. Wilks, who interprets it as proof that Johnson had embraced the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Although, according to Brocklesby, Johnson had simply remarked that faith was more important than good works for salvation, Wilks believes that through ignorance the reporter garbled the exact words, and that what Johnson really said was that faith alone counted for salvation, to the absolute exclusion of good works.³¹ Thus by placing his own interpretation on the passage, the clergyman concludes that Johnson on his deathbed affirmed an essential dogma of the Evangelicals.

Wilks' second piece of evidence, a prayer by Johnson, merits particular attention. In the *Life* by Hawkins we learn that the Reverend George Strahan, who attended Johnson during his last few weeks, gave him communion on December 5, just eight days before his death. Prior to receiving the sacrament, the dying man uttered a fervent prayer in which he commended his soul to God. The text of the prayer as it appears in Hawkins is:

Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now, as to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate, for the last time, the death of thy son Jesus Christ, Our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O Lord, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits and in thy mercy; forgive and accept my late conversion; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance; make this commemoration of him available to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity; and make the death of thy son Jesus effectual to my redemption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the multitude of my offenses. Bless my friends, have mercy upon all men. Support me by the grace of thy holy spirit in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death, and receive me, at my death, to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ—Amen.³²

This prayer, a copy of which exists in Johnson's own hand,³³ is particularly noteworthy because of the statement, "forgive and accept my late conversion." For people living in the late eighteenth century and the early part of the succeeding century, the term "conversion" was fraught with particular meaning. When Johnson died, the Wesleyan revival was at last bearing fruit. There were now thousands of Methodists and perhaps an even larger number of Evangelicals among the

31. *Christian Observer*, xxvii (November, 1827), 650 ff.

32. Hawkins, *op. cit.*, p. 584.

33. Hill-Powell, *op. cit.*, iv, App. J, 553.

dissenting sects and within the Establishment. In short, the greatest religious revival in more than a century was in progress. Although sectarianism existed, the important question among disciples of the revival was, not to what church do you belong, but, rather, have you been converted? For in the popular language of the day "conversion" had come to mean adopting Evangelical beliefs.

It is not strange, then, than an Evangelical like Wilks could put only one interpretation on Johnson's use of the term. To the clergyman the specific reference to a "late conversion" could mean only one thing, that the great man had experienced a change that brought with it belief in justification by faith and assurance of salvation. Christian Ignatius Latrobe, it will be noted, put the same interpretation on the prayer in the passage quoted above. He also remarks that the phrase "late conversion" is good evidence that the change in the doctor's religious views, though occurring late in life, had happened some time before his final illness.

The fact that many people employed "conversion" in the particular Evangelical connotation, however, does not prove that Johnson intended to convey that meaning in his prayer. In his dictionary he lists three definitions of the term: (1) "change from one state into another; transmutation." (2) "change from reprobation to grace, from a bad to a holy life." and (3) "change from one religion to another." When he incorporated the word in his prayer, he probably meant it in the second sense, a change from reprobation to grace. But he probably did not mean reprobation in the Calvinistic sense, nor grace in the Evangelical meaning of justification by faith alone. Today some scholars feel that by "late conversion" he was referring to his religious awakening while he was a student at Oxford, and that he described it as late because it occurred after a period of several years in which he was professedly weak, if not sceptical, in his views of Christianity. To this writer, however, a more likely interpretation is that Johnson had reference to a more recent change that took place upon his sudden recovery from dropsy. While this change did not lead to his embracing Evangelicalism, as Latrobe apparently thought, it did result, very likely, in a turning to God, a quickening of hope, and an even greater concern for religion than he had previously had.

One further point about Johnson's prayer of December 5, 1784, is pertinent to this discussion. Although Hawkins reproduced the prayer

in his *Life* as it appears in Johnson's own hand, Boswell printed a different and less authentic version. In addition to a few minor changes, he leaves out altogether the petition, "forgive and accept my late conversion."³⁴ To be sure, he took pains to note that he got his text from the Reverend Mr. Strahan, who had printed the altered version in his edition of Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations*.³⁵ And, as L. F. Powell has indicated,³⁶ Strahan was the original emender of the text. Nevertheless, Boswell must have known the true version, if only in the *Life* by Hawkins. Yet when he published his biography, he apparently preferred to print the prayer with Strahan's deletions.

If Boswell wilfully omitted from the prayer Johnson's reference to a late conversion, what was his reason? And why, for that matter, does he never mention the existence of the rumor in his *Life*? Even though there was no truth in the report, he must have heard the story in the more than seven years that elapsed between the death of his admired friend and the publication of the great biography. Yet he does not refer to the rumor, even to deny it.

On this subject it is interesting to turn to "The Religion of Dr. Johnson" by the Reverend W. T. Cairns. In this essay, published in 1946, the author proves to be the latest supporter of the theory that Johnson died an Evangelical. Cairns offers no new evidence. He merely cites the Winstanley story, which he considers authentic, and the remarkable piety of Johnson at the end of his life. On the other hand, Cairns does attempt to explain Boswell's failure to refer to the report of the conversion by suggesting that the biographer withheld information about the death of his friend. "Once and again," he writes, "one is conscious of a certain *stammer*" when Boswell describes Johnson's last days. The reason for his unusual reticence, according to Cairns, is that Boswell did not want readers to form the impression that the aged man had died a fanatic.³⁷

There may be some point in Cairns' observation,³⁸ even though one

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, 416, note 3.

36. *Ibid.*, App. J, 553.

37. Cairns, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 ff.

38. For instance, Boswell could probably have told us more about Johnson's relationship with the Moravians, Latrobe, and Hutton. Four months after the death of Johnson, Boswell dined with Hutton, and on July 2, 1786, he heard Latrobe preach at the Moravian Chapel in Fetter Lane. (*Private Papers of James Boswell*, xvi, 80 and 199 f.). Thus the biographer was personally acquainted with one of the clergymen, and may have been with the other.

cannot agree with him that the rumor was entirely valid. When Johnson died, most people of the upper ranks still regarded Evangelicalism as a flagrant form of enthusiasm. Although Boswell had sufficient curiosity to go out of his way to hear various Evangelical preachers, like most of Johnson's friends, he doubtless regarded the apostles of the movement as fanatics. He might, therefore, have considered it his duty to suppress any intimation that his old friend had joined the ranks of the enthusiasts. The duty would, of course, be all the clearer if he knew, as very likely he did, that no conversion in the Evangelical sense had occurred. Thus, while he had probably heard the rumor, he may have felt that the best way to stifle it was not to allude to it, even to deny it. Under these circumstances discretion may have led him to reproduce Strahan's expurgated copy of Johnson's prayer instead of the authentic text with its reference to a "late conversion." But enough of conjecture. Some day, perhaps, when Boswell's voluminous manuscript notes are published, we shall have his own explanation.

Meanwhile, there is no clear evidence that Johnson was converted in the Evangelical sense, despite the fact that a rumor to that effect circulated for several decades. Although he included the petition "forgive and accept my late conversion" in a prayer uttered shortly before his death, when he employed this term he probably did not use it in the currently popular meaning. More likely he was referring to a change that had led to his turning to God and a general strengthening of his religious convictions. There is no indication that he adopted the belief that man is saved by faith alone, nor any evidence that he arrived at the typical Evangelical convert's ecstatic assurance of salvation. Even at the end, perhaps because of his essential humility, he seems never to have felt with certainty that he was among the *elect*.

THE THEOLOGY OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR

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I

TO THE CAREFUL CRITICS of the perplexing theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, none of the usual, rational standards of criticism seems to be available. Religion, Niebuhr asserts, must solve its problems in terms of paradox rather than in terms of logical consistency (CP 197);¹ religion gives us absurdity, a unique madness, which transcends the rational in its attainment of true wisdom (MM 266); and religion, finally, gives to human life the meaning men require, but a meaning to be comprehended ultimately by appeal to a principle which is beyond comprehension (CP 196, ND I, 125). Thus a critic, pointing out an inconsistency or ambiguity or even a plain error in judging fact, can all too easily be told that this is not a weakness, but is rather one of those incomprehensible paradoxes by appeal to which Niebuhr claims superior value for theology over rational philosophy.

This difficulty has been complicated and increased by the situation in which Niebuhr has written and gained his following. Engaged in vigorous polemic against liberal Christianity, which was, in many quarters, both unrealistic and uncritical, Niebuhr during the 1930's and early 1940's gained an easy victory in one sharp attack after another. Preoccupied in this manner with contemporary social and political issues, he could not examine and consolidate his general position in terms of the fundamental issues at stake. Even in his *Gifford Lectures*, he was for the most part content to expound what would appear true only as long as he continued to let fundamentals go unexamined.

Despite these difficulties, nothing in Niebuhr is essentially inaccessible to criticism. Indeed, the appeal to paradox and the successful polemic in the absence of any examination of fundamentals are the two facts which, taken in conjunction, reveal the area in which he should be attacked. For Niebuhr's ultimate appeal to paradox is inextricably involved, as he sees it, with the analysis of human experience which has won him a following. The ultimate and incomprehen-

1. Abbreviations in the text: MM—*Moral Man and Immoral Society*; CP—*Christianity and Power Politics*; ND—*The Nature and Destiny of Man*.

sible paradoxes are not a set of principles which can be isolated and defended apart from the experience they are employed to interpret. The paradoxes are involved in this experience as necessary presuppositions of its adequate interpretation, and apart from some presuppositions, paradoxical or otherwise, this experience is inaccessible to any interpretation. To understand Niebuhr and to discover where he can be legitimately attacked is, therefore, to examine the area in which his polemic has been carried on and to investigate his reasons for supposing that any adequate analysis in this area makes it necessary to accept ultimate paradoxes.

In the three sections which follow, I shall examine Niebuhr's analysis of human experience in order to show: first, why he has been so persuasive to his Protestant contemporaries; secondly, how, in gaining this wide appeal, he has mistaken the condition of twentieth century man for the universal condition of all mankind; and finally, how this error involves him in a position which is both non-Christian and atheistic.

II

From 1932, when he published *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, on through to the present, Niebuhr has been almost exclusively concerned with what seems to him the most striking and significant fact about human experience, the disparity between man's moral pretensions on the one hand and persisting social evils on the other. Everywhere, Niebuhr has seen men complacent about themselves in the very midst of injustice. And this complacency, this "easy conscience," stands as a barrier between the complacent man and any effective social and political action. Niebuhr's Protestant colleagues in the pre-war years professed to follow the commandments in the Sermon on the Mount, but they so loved all men as brothers that they were unable to defend by force any man from tyranny at his brother's hand. The liberal philosophers, like John Dewey and his followers, were so completely enamored of "intelligence" and "free co-operative inquiry" that they failed to perceive any occasion on which man might have to make a moral choice as different from some other kinds of reasonable decisions. Yet never in previous history had man's inhumanity to man been practiced scientifically on so vast a scale, so cynically, and so callously. Niebuhr's claim to interpret man's experience more adequately than any of his liberal colleagues amounts to this: that he alone ex-

poses the grim realities of man's situation and provides man with the moral stamina and principles to deal with it (CP 179).

As a theologian, Niebuhr clearly discerned that any adequate religion must deal directly with this most pressing of all contemporary problems. Indeed, no American theologian of our time appreciated so well the primary function of religion as providing principles of interpretation and organization by means of which man can comprehend and effectively control the otherwise chaotic aspects of his natural and social environment. Religion cannot function apart from the situations in which man at any particular time finds himself. In an age when Protestantism was aloof from and unrealistic in its attitude towards the world at large, Niebuhr's courageous determination to face the world and deal with its problems would alone have recommended him to vast numbers of sober and searching people in the Protestant community. His appeal was inevitable to that large portion of Americans who, as his contemporaries, faced inescapably the same problems, and who, as Christians, expected to find the solution in their religious traditions.

Yet to be persuasive on this general level, Niebuhr had also to be persuasive in the details of the solution he offered. This detailed solution to the problems of man's social and political experience emphasized as central the reality and significance of genuinely moral decision. In Niebuhr's view, a moral decision, in order to be genuine, must involve choice between two incompatible standards of value. As no ultimate moral standard can be conclusively established by appeals to reason or to fact (CP 204), the complacent commitment to any single standard to the exclusion of all possible alternatives is an evasion of the whole moral problem. It is an evasion, not only in the sense that these alternatives will influence one's judgment whether or not he is aware of it (ND I, 258-59); it is also an evasion in that the real moral issues concern just these ultimate alternative standards. The "easy conscience" of modern man, which Niebuhr exposes and condemns, involves making moral judgments in terms of some one ultimate principle accepted without examination or criticism. Complacency characterizes every man whose moral judgments are thus made in the absence of genuine moral decision concerning the ultimate standards. In place of this easy conscience, Niebuhr substitutes an anxious and troubled moral awareness which at all times acknowledges as legitimately

binding the competing claims of egoism and altruism, self-love and self-giving love, *eros* and *agape*, the demand to treat each man as an end in himself and the demand to treat all others as means to one's own success. Corresponding to these two loves or desires are two laws, the Christian law of love and the secular law of justice. On the one hand, the Christian love commandment demands as an ideal the sacrifice of all selfish individual and group interests and the repudiation of violence and force as means. On the other hand, the law of justice bids one secure what is one's own due and the due of the community in which one lives, and to succeed at this requires the use of force. Because these two demands and their corresponding laws are incompatible yet equally binding, no possible act of an individual or a community can perfectly fulfill either the one or the other or both together. In short, man must eternally sin against both love and justice, against both sides of his dual nature.

In these details of his theory, Niebuhr clarifies for his contemporaries the urgent, crucial, and tragic nature of their moral situation. He both describes what men can themselves experience and provides the norms which men with such experience desire. No contemporary can fail to recognize the accuracy of Niebuhr's description. Seldom before in the history of the world have man's altruistic ideals seemed so far removed from the realities of social and political history; seldom have love of self and love of others seemed so irreconcilable in requiring opposite and incompatible modes of action; and seldom has man so faced the necessity to choose between them, to make genuinely moral decisions, and to be aggressively active in the moral sphere. The tragic tensions and temptations, which Niebuhr effectively interprets in terms of sin, are an inescapable fact in the experience of modern men. No man living in the present has to exert himself to feel morally anxious, insecure, and impotent. And Protestants, in accepting this new version of man's sin, took on no extra burden. Indeed, Niebuhr did not even require them to modify courses of action to which they were already committed. As all men are inescapably sinners, no man can judge for another so long as each man feels the agony which measures his awareness of personal moral responsibility. Everything could be essentially as it was before, except that no man could any longer be happy about it. And this was indeed a relief to many whose happiness was a duty they had hitherto thought it necessary to fulfill.

Describing man's inescapable anxiety as sin actually lightens the burden by giving it a cosmic significance it could not otherwise have.

But Niebuhr's theory is also normative. It not only describes what most men in these times do feel; it prescribes that all men ought in all times to feel so. Man's anxious awareness of the conflict between two loves reveals the truth of man's existence as a limited and sinning creature. It defines him as an individual who can escape his moral responsibility only by ceasing to live. In this normative aspect of his theory, Niebuhr also speaks persuasively to his contemporaries. Most men recognize that they cannot in their own lives live the Sermon on the Mount; most men understand that they could not become mystics even if they could spare the time; and most men at some point are incapable of sinking to the level of pure animality, social or otherwise. This doctrine justified them in working for what they might very possibly secure. Man's "concern for some centuries to come is not the creation of an ideal society in which there will be uncoerced and perfect peace and justice, but a society in which there will be enough justice, and in which coercion will be sufficiently non-violent to prevent his common enterprise from issuing in complete disaster" (MM 22).

Both as descriptive of man's situation and as prescribing a norm for it, Niebuhr's theology has the meaning and persuasiveness of a great, moral sermon. It enlightens and fortifies the religious soul by revealing the present moment under the aspect of eternity and by modeling eternity on the pattern of the present. If, to rational analysis, it seems inconclusive and inconsistent, ambiguous and obscure, to religious insight, given and received at the level of a sermon, these very philosophical vices appear as the virtues of the method of metaphor. Just as a work of art expands its characters into symbols of universal man and may, in the process, defy the canons of logical consistency and clarity, so Niebuhr's theology is a vast religious allegory in which the tragedy of the twentieth century is dignified by expansion into a universal symbol of the human situation. But to substitute homiletics for theology, rhetoric for analysis, is to pay for one's appeal at too high a cost.

III

Niebuhr purchased meaning on the level of literary and religious insight by sacrificing the Christian Gospel to contemporary European thought. Quoting Scripture, citing Augustine and Calvin, he misleads

his audience. He reads into these traditions what he has taken from nineteenth and twentieth century romanticism and existentialism. He is the spiritual brother of the philosophers Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, of the theologians Buber, Heim, and Guthrie, and of the novelists Kafka, Mann, and Čapek. As a consequence, despite Niebuhr's use of Christian terminology, he is so narrowly contemporary as to be both non-Christian and mistaken.

Niebuhr's error is revealed in his criticism of Hume and Dewey. What is at first singular in the brief, five-page criticism of these philosophers (ND I, 107-12), is Niebuhr's failure to make any effort to understand them. Shocked by what he takes to be their complacency, he finds both men deficient in overestimating the adequacy of reason as impartial and unbiased. This is an almost incredible misinterpretation. As almost everyone surely knows, Hume insisted, just as Niebuhr does, that reason in moral matters can never escape its enslavement to the two passions of self-love and benevolence. Dewey has always argued emphatically that intelligence is so involved in a complex interaction of organism and environment as never to be unbiased and impartial. If Niebuhr wants to object to Hume's complacency concerning human benevolence and Dewey's complacency concerning the effectiveness of social science, he must do so without imputing to these men errors they did not make.

But Niebuhr's treatment of Hume and Dewey is instructive, for it locates the error of dignifying man's present troubles by defining them as normal and universal conditions. As Hume and Dewey were undeniably complacent, the question to be asked is: How were such intelligent men able to be complacent, if their condition was in fact as miserable as Niebuhr supposes it must have been? The answer, of course, is that neither Hume nor Dewey found their situation miserable. Without appreciating its significance, Niebuhr himself suggests the correct answer for Dewey who has written in a period of "comparative social stability and security" (ND I, 111-12); and a close reading of Hume would have provided the answer in more general terms, that men can afford to be complacent in proportion as they have a common interest and work co-operatively together to secure it. In short, Hume and Dewey were complacent because the condition of man in the communities in which they lived made complacency possible. If both philosophers denied an impartial and unbiased moral

reason and yet were more confident than Niebuhr in the adequacy of reason, the explanation is obvious: within a stable and secure community sharing common ideals and interests, reason in the service of passion can, nevertheless, adequately solve all the problems which arise. Far from misinterpreting their situation, Hume and Dewey very ably reported it. If they tended to make the common human error of supposing all men to exist in an essentially similar condition, Niebuhr even more flagrantly commits the same mistake. Dewey denied that there is *a* human nature and *a* human situation. Hume envisaged, as possible alternatives to social stability, situations in which every man would be for himself against all others. Only Niebuhr is unable to envisage any man different from himself.

But this misinterpretation of Hume and Dewey not only illuminates the nature of Niebuhr's error; it also locates the thinkers upon whom Niebuhr most depends. For both Hume and Dewey are closer to each other in optimistically regarding society as a necessary condition of all human values than either is to Niebuhr, who shares the extreme romanticist's distrust of all communal activity. Hume, writing out of the traditions of Continental rationalism and English empiricism, is a European thinker of the eighteenth century; Dewey, in the traditions of idealism and pragmatism, is an American philosopher of the early twentieth century. Between Hume and Dewey lies nineteenth century Continental romanticism, whose presuppositions Niebuhr uncritically accepts.

Niebuhr writes straight out of the pages of Nietzsche. He borrows Nietzsche's ethical dualism, with its definition of a herd morality on the one hand and a Superman morality on the other. Man's collective and social activity operates in terms of ethical criteria which stand in eternal opposition to the morality of the Free Spirit, the Superman (ND I, 208-209; CP 22). "Individuals have a moral code which makes the actions of collective man an outrage to their conscience" (MM 9). Between Nietzsche and Niebuhr, the difference lies in Niebuhr's inversion of Nietzsche's two moralities. Whereas Nietzsche's Superman morality involved an individual's free expression of the *will to power* in opposition to the herd morality of a Hebrew-Christian community, Niebuhr's Superman is a Christian, asserting each individual's responsibility to the Christian law of love in opposition to the *will to power* morality of the herd.

This inversion of the Nietzschean theory has two consequences which Niebuhr sees and accepts. Because man's collective activity always expresses an individual or group will to self-preservation and power, no genuine and stable community is possible (CP 27-28). Not only is Niebuhr's Superman set over against his group, but each individual in the group is essentially in conflict with every other individual, and each group is in conflict with other groups. At any given time, the stability of a community merely reflects the extent to which it has achieved a delicate balance of power. Thus each individual is in certain fundamental respects an alien to his neighbor, an alien even to his husband or his wife (CP 27). The second consequence of Niebuhr's theory is that no man is free to succeed at the expense of the herd. Whereas Nietzsche's Superman, asserting the will to power, could with a free conscience exploit the Hebrew-Christian herd, Niebuhr's Superman, responsible to the Christian law of self-giving love, can never escape his duties to the herd. By employing the Christian law of love as an indiscriminate principle of criticism by means of which to judge all group achievements, the Christian Superman is able to distinguish some forms of stability as better than others, and to employ force to secure the better. Thus Niebuhr's Christian man is, on the one hand, an alien in society, inescapably in conflict with every other individual and inevitably insulted by the power politics morality of group activity; on the other hand, this Christian man cannot shirk his responsibility to other individuals and to his group.

In one form or another, this same human situation was exploited by the European novelists of the early twentieth century. Niebuhr, expressing his disgust with the herd, might be Karel Čapek satirizing the modern community as subhuman robots in *RUR*, or, in the *War with the Newts*, reporting that newt intelligence is in no way remarkable, as it does not exceed the intelligence of the average Englishman of the present time. Niebuhr's Christian has the status of the artist in Thomas Mann's short stories and novels. Hans Castorp, in *The Magic Mountain*, tries to escape society, is isolated both from other individuals and his group. And Tonio Kröger, in Mann's early short story, feels a fatal and inescapable tension between the attraction of pure art apart from the herd and the herd itself. Or the situation is as in *The Castle* of Franz Kafka, where the hero can be reconciled neither to heaven nor to human society, yet is mysteriously and unavoidably

drawn to both. Common to all these writers is a single thesis: on the one hand, collective activity, its consequences and involvements, cannot be escaped; on the other, no man of artistic or religious vision can find himself at home among the herd which, by its very nature, is incapable of supporting the highest of human ideals.

In the 1930's, the period in which Niebuhr developed his doctrine, European painters joined their literary colleagues to depict this same situation. Creating under the impulse of a social conscience, they painted into their pictures compassion for a collective man, for whom there was no hope and no help. And just as many of Niebuhr's Protestant colleagues, lacking his social conscience, tended during this time to withdraw from the social and political realities of the Western world, so many painters and writers withdrew to produce work frequently distinguished by abstruseness: the ideals of beauty, like the ideals of religious love, had either to be compromised or to be asserted without relevance to the grim reality of contemporary history. Niebuhr, like the more sensitive novelists, reported this situation; and like the socially preoccupied painters, he chose to compromise his highest ideal in order to be effective in the area of history.

What is tragic in Niebuhr's relation to these Europeans is his failure to perceive how limited in extent is the situation on which they all so ably report. No man with vision would deny the thin shell of common interest which supports contemporary society, nor fail to appreciate the abyss into which men drop when that shell breaks. But the strange difference between Nietzsche and Niebuhr in respect to the content of herd morality reveals how recent has been the collapse of the old Christian community. In Nietzsche's day, this community was so intact as to be an obstacle to the free expression of romantic individuality; yet within the memory of men now living, the situation has been reversed to the extent that individual and group interests are now an obstacle in the path of Christianity. The collapse of this old community of Christian and bourgeois ideals came first in Europe, where the romanticists attacked it as both burdensome and empty. European thinkers and novelists first joined in the attack and then, as they perceived the effects, warned their contemporaries of the situation. Rightly, the novelists enlarged the tragic condition of modern Europe to make it a symbol of man's universal situation. Yet most of the novelists were able enough historians to appreciate that the contem-

porary condition was not in fact universal. Thomas Mann's Joseph, in the end, goes down into Egypt to become a member of a community. Čapek's robots become capable of self-giving love, and his newts are survived by mankind. But Niebuhr, with insufficient knowledge of the past and no hope for the future, subscribes to Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence: so long as man has been upon the earth and so long as man shall remain man, his existence must be as tragic, insecure, and anxious as modern men have only recently come to find it. That men simply have not *always* found their situation so dire, Niebuhr explains away by charging Hume and Dewey, who assert it, with mistakes they did not make. That men need not necessarily find the future as anguished as the present, Niebuhr tries to deny by appeal to Nietzsche's theory of two moralities, a theory which lies at the very origins of the contemporary situation Niebuhr is trying objectively to assess.

Niebuhr's uncritical acceptance of this Nietzschean theory, with its attitude towards the herd as repulsive, blinds him to the manner in which society is the necessary support of all values, both high and low, both those of the Christian Superman and those of the selfish herd. In respect to this, Niebuhr's theory is a strange parallel to Plato's. Niebuhr's ideal of Christian love, like Plato's ideal of justice, is an eternal Form, which has no direct relevance to this phenomenal world, because it can be realized here on earth only when contaminated with its opposite. Both Plato and Niebuhr developed their doctrines under a collapsing community of belief, no longer able to support the traditional values. Yet, in both cases, the community of values continued to function just enough to make the traditional ideals seem relevant dreams. In the absence of a considerable community supporting the values of Classic Greece, Plato would have had no students in the Academy; and in the absence of a considerable community supporting Christian values, Niebuhr would be preaching to empty churches. Failing to appreciate that what is common is not necessarily low, and failing to perceive that apart from community support even the highest values cannot be intelligibly asserted, Niebuhr is all unconsciously working on the side of the Devil. By finding in group activity only what insults the man of insight, he has given up the effort to create the only community which can save Christian values from ex-

tion. If, in fact, the ideal of love is now as unrealizable and irrelevant as Niebuhr believes, the time cannot be distant when men will cease to regard it even as a pertinent dream.

IV

Although Niebuhr recognizes that all theology inevitably errs by taking some specific situation to be man's universal condition (CP 220), he fails to perceive how seriously he himself has committed this error and how, in committing it, he reflects in his theology all of the godlessness of the twentieth century. In the specifically religious aspects of his problem, Niebuhr faces a paradox which is not of his own making: When men are economically, socially, and politically secure, they tend to be complacent about their gods, whose ways in such circumstances seem utterly comprehensible and compatible with basic human interests; but as the human situation becomes increasingly tragic and insecure, the gods, whom man now needs desperately, must be thought of as operating in ever more hidden and incomprehensible ways. Thus, when Niebuhr takes as his starting point the tragedy of the twentieth century, and magnifies it by giving it universal significance in terms of Nietzschean ethical dualism, man is made an alien, not only to his neighbor, but to his God. And when Niebuhr supports man's alienation from God by appeal to Kierkegaardian existentialism, the combination of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard yields a theology explicitly agnostic and implicitly atheistic.

According to the existentialist analysis, formulated by Kierkegaard and accepted by Niebuhr (ND I, 163), man is not *essentially* rational, Christian, spiritual, or good. To say that the *essence* of man is any one or the other of these is strictly meaningless—one might as well say that men are essentially thieves. In existentialism, the fundamental fact about man is his *existence* as both animal and spirit, as both limited and unlimited. These two aspects of man's dual nature are sufficiently distinct that man is genuinely free to choose one or the other as that which he shall *essentially become*. But, paradoxically enough, these two natures are so joined in each man that no man can, in fact, become either pure animal or pure spirit. Hence, while each man is free to choose what he shall become, no man can become what he shall choose. Man is free, but free only to sin against both sides of his dual nature.

Subscribing to this theory, Niebuhr is an extreme agnostic: God's existence and nature are inexplicable and incomprehensible to man (ND I, 125; CP 196-97). God is Pure Spirit. Man, who in this life receives no saving grace, is both animal and spirit. As both, man is so limited as never to be able to transcend his limitations and understand the ways of God (ND I, 163, 170, 258-59). Thus Niebuhr asserts, what is essential to Thomas Henry Huxley's definition of agnosticism, that reason cannot demonstrate the existence and nature of God; and he denies, what Hume and Huxley were denying, that natural theology in its Thomistic and Deistic forms is adequate and conclusive. What is peculiar to Niebuhr's agnosticism, in its dependence upon Kierkegaard's analysis, is its failure to terminate in any one of the three obvious and traditional religious conclusions. First, it is more extreme than Huxley's agnosticism, because it denies that man can ever have adequate natural knowledge of God. Second, it is more extreme than the agnosticism of the mystics, because it denies not only rational access to God's nature, but also supra-rational access through mystical experience. Third, it is more extreme than the agnosticism of Biblical Religion, because even the revelation of God's pure spirit in the Scriptures is asserted to be incomprehensible, a fact which Niebuhr undertakes to demonstrate in respect of the Christian love commandment (ND II, 72-74; CP 25-26). But any agnosticism so extreme as this goes far towards making the existence and nature of God so completely inaccessible as to be in the end unimportant.

As a matter of fact, without any detriment to Niebuhr's theory, God's existence can be denied. This would not be possible if Niebuhr believed in God as a personal being with the attributes of ideal personality. Such a personal God as a transcendent *Thou* might reveal Himself and His demands to finite and limited men. Some men could at times be confronted with an Unlimited and Spiritual Other, whose personality and commands could not be denied. However unsatisfactory in certain respects, the *I-Thou*, man-God relation, as developed by Buber and Heim, is consistent with one aspect of existentialism. Niebuhr, however, does not permit man to be directly confronted by a transcendent *Thou*. For the *I-Thou* relation, he substitutes an *I-Word* relation (ND I, 130). Man is confronted not by a personal God, but by the unintelligible and revealed Word of God.

Niebuhr's evasion of the whole issue concerning God's personality is explained both by his extreme agnosticism and his preoccupation with the moral problem. In terms of his agnosticism, no man could know or comprehend in what sense, if any, the Pure Spirit which is God has the attributes of personality. For moral reasons, too, Niebuhr could not permit God to be conceived as a person. On the one hand, such a God might be conceived as a compassionate Father who wills an earthly community of brotherly love and who has revealed His will intelligibly in the Sermon on the Mount. On the other hand, Niebuhr desires to confront man with an absolute moral law which no man can possibly fulfill, but by which all men can condemn every human enterprise as sinful (CP 25-26). Unfortunately, however, in Niebuhr's system, God is not needed to furnish this moral law. Because man is both egoistic animal and altruistic spirit, the spiritual side of man's nature itself generates the demand for an uncontaminated altruism. As also inescapably animal, man can never fulfill this demand, but by appeal to it he can take the measure of his sin against spirit. It is, therefore, possible to deny God's existence as pure spirit and still to retain all that is essential to Niebuhr's purposes. If as a theologian Niebuhr is required to talk about God, he might define as God the spiritual side of man's nature. By such an expedient definition, he might mislead his congregation; but he would mislead them less than at present, because now he must profess belief in a God who is unknowable and who has no function.

More than unnecessary, Niebuhr's Christian theism is a positive detriment to his theory. His extreme agnosticism forces him to reinterpret the Christian Gospel so radically that he succeeds in being a Christian only by discrediting Christ. For Niebuhr's account of the Christian love commandment, central to his whole theology, can be true only if Jesus could have been guilty of false witness against God. Niebuhr has concealed this absurd consequence of his position, both from himself and from his followers, by a strange verbalism. He claims to be a Christian by recognizing the Atonement as the supreme revelation of Christian love, and by seeing in the Sermon on the Mount an incomprehensible and divine absurdity. But whoever refuses to be misled by mere words will perceive that the "divine absurdity" of the Sermon on the Mount must so reduce the stature of Jesus as to make

the Atonement without significance. For, in plain and prosaic English, the divine absurdity of Jesus amounts to His being utterly mistaken. In the Synoptic Gospels, no evidence whatsoever supports Niebuhr's claim that the command to love thy neighbor as thyself cannot be fulfilled. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—when Jesus said this, He could hardly have had it in mind to add silently, as a grim joke, "but pure in heart no man can be, and whoever even thinks it possible sins thereby." Yet, in Niebuhr's interpretation, Jesus must either have been guilty of this conscious duplicity or have uttered an unconscious lie. On either alternative, the divine nature of Jesus as God Incarnate is repudiated. To falsify God's true word is hardly the act of God become flesh. Apart from the Incarnation, which as a matter of fact Niebuhr never adequately treats, the Atonement must lack significance, for the ideal of love itself is not sufficiently unique. Many men other than Jesus have given their lives and suffered inconceivably for impossible and absurd ideals. Many men, amongst them the pacifists whom Niebuhr attacked, have been anxious to assert and to suffer for this same ideal of love, with its origin in the spiritual side of finite man's dual nature. Beneath its surface and its misleading terminology, Niebuhr's theology may be in some sense religious, but it is not religious in any genuine Christian sense. It is burdened in its effort to maintain a theism in which men cannot possibly find their God and to talk about a Christ who is in no way unique.

Finally, if Niebuhr were to combine consistently his Kierkegaardian existentialism and his inversion of Nietzsche, and if he were then to consider this combination in relation to his conception of religion, he would emerge an avowed atheist. The function of religion, as Niebuhr sees it, is to order and interpret man's experience (CP 6, 204-5), to reveal the truth and meaning of man's tragic existence (CP 179), and to face man with his full responsibility for inescapable moral decisions (CP 200). Yet if man's situation is as tragic as Niebuhr claims to find it, all three of religion's functions will be best fulfilled by denying God's existence. If Niebuhr's inversion of Nietzsche is warranted and man is in fact an alien to his neighbor, if the existentialism of Kierkegaard is sound and man is also an alien to his God, then denying the existence of an incomprehensible God further illuminates man's tragedy, more adequately interprets the anxiety and isolation man

feels, and more clearly makes man responsible for moral decision. In tragedy, to need a God who does not exist requires each man, in an act of cosmic courage, to assert himself as the Absolute in his full moral stature. In his more lucid moments, Kierkegaard perceived that this was the clear implication of his existentialism. Sartre, the French existentialist, insists upon it. To combine this existentialism and the ethical dualism of Nietzsche makes the conclusion inescapable. Such is the genuinely atheistic implication of Niebuhr's misguided effort to interpret in Christian terms the universal significance of the twentieth century. Drawing upon the theories of the nineteenth and twentieth century Continental thinkers, Niebuhr has rescued the moral austerity of original Protestantism at the expense of its Christian content.

THE CONCEPT OF MYSTICISM:
ANALYSIS OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY
HILDEGARD OF BINGEN TO GUIBERT OF
GEMBLoux*

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IN MIGNE'S MONUMENTAL EDITION OF THE CHURCH FATHERS, one full folio is devoted to the writings of a German woman. Nevertheless, this illustrious "Woman Church Father," Hildegard of Bingen, *Sancta Hildegardis*, is not widely known in Germany and, naturally, no better known in the Anglo-Saxon world. Indeed, perhaps the most arresting piece of St. Hildegard's writings is not even printed in Migne's bulky volume. This is a letter she wrote in 1171 to the monk, Guibert of Gembloux. Written almost at the dawn of German medieval thought, the letter gives a description and an interpretation of mystical experience which, at least in my view, must be counted among the most instructive attempts ever made in this respect. All I aspire to do, in this brief article, is to draw the attention of a wider public to this medieval document, and to interpret it briefly in the light of modern ideas on mysticism, without falling victim to the peril of undue modernizing.

By a considerable majority of analysts, the realm of mystical experience has very often been narrowed down to exclusively religious experience. Moreover, historians of religion, philosophy, and literature have often refused to acknowledge more than one theme of reflection and experience as genuinely and essentially mystical: the *unio mystica*, the awareness of a union between God and man.

Scholars of such diverse origins and divergent intellectual tendencies as Albrecht Ritschl,¹ Erwin Rohde² (the friend of Nietzsche), Otto

* Dedicated to Professor and Mrs. Rufus M. Jones on the occasion of his 85th birthday, on January 25, 1948. I wish to express also, in this place, my gratitude to the American Committee for Emigré Scholars, Writers, and Artists for the support given to my studies in mysticism. To my friend Joseph Frank, Washington, D. C., I am very much obliged for his translation of German texts into English.

1. *Geschichte des Pietismus*, I (Bonn, 1880), 28: Mysticism teaches "die ekstatische Einigung mit Gott, . . . Weltflucht und Weltverneinung"; cf. *ibid.* III (1886), 470 f.

2. *Psyche; The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (Lon-

Pfleiderer,³ Christian Janentzki,⁴ and many others, agree that, as the essential problem of mystical experience, only the *copula spiritualis* can be recognized—only the spiritual marriage between absolute and human being, the *deificatio*, the fusing and merging of the Absolute and the human soul into each other, or, at least, a *unio mystica* realized in the *scintilla animae*, the divine spark of human consciousness mentioned by Bernard of Clairvaux, who felt that dogma forbade the union of God and man to its full extent.

Rudolf Otto protested, and in my opinion rightly so, against all these attempts to narrow down so rigorously the area in which mystical experience may appear. He pointed out that to Indian Yoga the existence of God is at least "a matter of indifference," and, nevertheless, Yoga is mystical; it teaches no union with God but only a mysticism of the soul.⁵ Otto's effort to protect the field of mystical experience from being hemmed in too rigidly is in obvious harmony with certain tendencies of Rufus M. Jones and Evelyn Underhill; and these tendencies must, in my opinion, be carried even further.

This extension of the realm of mysticism becomes, it seems to me, indispensable as soon as one considers certain characteristics and important intellectual products of mysticism which are too often overlooked. Sebastian Franck, for instance, Luther's great contemporary, created a kind of mystical philosophy of history for which the mystical union with God can in no way be considered central; and the same is true of certain mystical theories about nature held by Francis of Assisi, as well as by Jakob Boehme, and many other thinkers with strong mystical tendencies. Neither the etymological origin of the concept of mysticism, nor the variety of its intellectual creations in the course of their historical development, justifies the reduction of mysticism to a bare question of deification.

Hildegard of Bingen, eight hundred years ago, had already desired to guard the world of mysticism from any limitation to a particular

don, 1925), p. 254: The fundamental principle of all true mysticism is the idea of "the essential unity of the divine and the human spirit; their unification as the aim of religion."

3. *Religion and Historic Faiths* (New York, 1907), pp. 21 f.

4. *Mystik und Rationalismus* (Munich, 1922).

5. *Mysticism, East and West* (New York, 1932), pp. 143, 142: "Yoga is not a mysticism of union, but purely a mysticism of the soul." It is not "God-mysticism, but soul-mysticism."

subject-matter. She explains this specifically: all her mystical insights rest on a particular mode of vision, but this vision is not tied to one or even to a few themes; it extends itself, rather, to historical, sociological, and ethical fields, as well as to the knowledge of nature.

From my childhood, even before my limbs, nerves and veins had any strength, up to the present time, when my years are more than 70 in number, I have continuously enjoyed the blessing of the vision. By this means my soul rises, as God decrees, up to the height of the firmament and the shifting strata of the sky; it widens itself out to take in the various peoples, even when they are far from me in distant lands. And because I see these things with my soul, I behold them as I do the movement of clouds and other created things. I hear all this, however, not with corporeal ears, shape it not with my heart's thought, nor take it in with any of my five senses; I behold all this only in my soul with open eyes . . . awake by day and night. . . . The light that I behold is not bound to any place, but it is infinitely more luminous than a sunlit cloud. And as the sun, the moon, and the stars appear in the water, so to me writings, dialogues, virtues, and various works of man are fashioned and radiate in this Light.⁶

Even Dean Inge seems to be satisfied, at least sporadically, with the simple explanation that mysticism has its origin in the consciousness of the beyond,⁷ but such a definition would be too vague. Evidently a consciousness of the beyond is contained not only in mysticism but, to no less degree, in all the different types of *theologia rationalis*; and how paradoxical would it be, for instance, to call Christian Wolff's *Theologia Naturalis* the work of a mystic! All the thousands of efforts which have been devoted to rationalistic proofs of the existence of God since the early Middle Ages obviously testify to a consciousness of the beyond, but this does not in any way mean that they can be termed mystical on that account. Whether one thinks of the ontological, the cosmological, the physico-teleological, or any other proof of the existence of God, all this reasoning is theology or metaphysics, not mysticism.

It is completely hopeless to attempt to distinguish mystical from metaphysical or even from scientific thought by assigning a different field to each of these intellectual attitudes. Far more fruitful is the way hinted at by Hildegard of Bingen. Mysticism is distinguished from other intellectual disciplines not because it deals with an exclusive

6. *Analecta sacra, spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, ed. by J. P. Pitra (Paris, 1882), VIII, 332: Epistola "Guiberto responded Hildegardis, Anno 1171."

7. *Christian Mysticism* (New York, 1933), pp. 4 f.

field of experience, but by the way it approaches all possible fields: Nature, the "shifting of clouds" as well as the "virtues . . . and works of mankind," and the characteristics of "peoples . . . in far-distant lands."

The specific method by which mystics approach all possible fields of inquiry is negatively characterized by Hildegard as a blocking off of the "bodily" senses and, positively, as a "seeing with the soul" or, as it is perhaps better formulated in her *Scivias*, a "hearing with the sharp ears of the inner understanding."⁸

This negative characterization of mystical understanding is completely in agreement with one of the possible etymological roots of the concept of mysticism. The Greek verb *μύειν* means, in the active, "to shut up, to shut the mouth, the eyes, or to separate oneself, to seclude oneself from the world"; and *μύεσθαι*, means "to be initiated" into such secret rites, doctrines, and cults as were connected with the names of many Greek gods, to be introduced to the mysteries of Zeus, Bacchus, or the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries.

In a positive sense, the mystical "seeing with the soul," means an understanding aided by symbols, poetic comparisons, metaphors, analogies, myths, allegories, and parables. Sensuous images and sounds are deprived of their immediate naturalistic meaning by means of these symbolic references, and, as in poetry, provided with a wider and emotionally much richer significance. Countries and peoples, nature and history, appear to this mystical vision in another "light" no longer in their bare, factual immediacy, but fitted out with a meaning and significance, a value or lack of value, which may be regarded as a reflection and effluence of the highest possible interpretation of existence, as a "shadow of the living light."

The configuration of this light I can in no way describe, just as I cannot gaze straight into the sun's disk. . . . I see . . . in this light neither height, nor breadth, nor width. . . . But I occasionally see in it, not often to be sure, another light, which is revealed to me as "the living light"; the other light I generally see, however, is signified to me as the shadow of the living light.⁹

8. *Patrologiae cursus completus*, ed. by J. P. Migne (Paris, 1885). Series II: Eccl. Latina, vol. 197, p. 738D, "Scivias," Liber III, Visio XIII: "Qui autem acutas aures interioris intellectus habet, hic in ardente amore speculi mei, ad verba haec anhelet." Cf. also her "Liber vitae meritorum per simplicem hominem a vivente luce revelatarum," prima pars § 2 (*Analecta Sacra*, VIII, 3): "Tu quae . . . non corporali sed spirituali vera visione docta es."

9. *Analecta Sacra*, VIII, 333, 332.

The mystical vision, like the esthetic one, seeks something quite different from the observation of the bare given facts of existence, or the drawing of purely rational conclusions from these descriptions of facts. The mystical and esthetic vision seeks, rather, to grasp the inner import, the living impact and meaning of these facts. Even in the naturalistic novel, generally something more is at issue than a report on facts; and the same applies to all mystical legends, tales, and stories. Hassidism, the most recent powerful mystical movement of Judaism, reaching from the middle of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, has laid down and expanded its mystical teachings almost exclusively in the shape of brief stories, and all these stories are, so to speak, manuals of instruction in mystical doctrines.

Hildegard of Bingen characterized ecstasy as irrelevant, or as almost disturbing. In this respect a vast majority of thinkers with mystical tendencies—from Philo to the present—emphatically diverge from Hildegard. In science and even in metaphysics, it is true, the ideal attitude is freedom from all feelings or emotions, the judgment *sine ira et studio*. But, in contrast to this, most mystics have taken special pride in their consciously emotional approach to everything real, in their essentially loving or even ecstatic immersion in the object of their contemplation. And even Hildegard, independently of her reflections on the essence of mysticism, displayed in her concrete mystical perceptions strong feelings of sympathetic intimacy and relationship with the object of her mystical vision.

As one example from countless proofs of this capacity to feel into external objects, we may cite the following, "Mourning of the Elements," from Hildegard's *Liber vitae meritorum*:

I heard a mighty voice crying from the elements of the world: We cannot move and complete our accustomed rounds as we should do according to the precepts of our Master. For mankind, because of its corruptions, spins us about like the sails of a windmill. And so now we stink from pestilence and from hunger after justice.¹⁰

In the vast literature on the fall of man through sin, and the suffering of nature caused by this fall, I know scarcely a more moved or moving humanizing of dead nature than this. Small though the number of words and comparisons may be, the emotion with which the age-old

10. *Ibid.*, 105: 1, *Liber vitae meritorum*, III, II, *Querela Elementorum*.

doctrine of original sin is relived again in these lines is evident. The very elements of nature itself grow sick through the crimes of men, decay, and became deformed; even the cornerstones of inanimate nature are swept into this all-pervading spiritual process; visible things are only symbols of an invisible battle between good and evil which composes the innermost core of reality.

In her letter to Guibert, however, Hildegard did not content herself merely with describing mystical understanding as a "spiritual," "inner," "hearing" and "seeing"; she added further particulars which are at least as instructive as these. Everything, so she continues,

that I behold and experience in these visions I preserve in my memory for a long time, so that, when I see and hear this light, I call on my memory and at the same time see, hear, know and, as it were in the same instant, learn what I know. What I do not behold, however, that I do not know, for I am unlearned; I have only been taught simply to read the letters of the alphabet. What I write down in my visions, that I see and hear. I write down only such unpolished Latin words as I hear in my visions, for I do not learn in these how to write like a philosopher; also the words are not like the words uttered by human lips; they are, rather, like lightning flame and like a cloud, moving in the pure ether. . . . Because of the continuing illness from which I suffer, it is many times irksome to bring forth the words and sights shown to me; but when my soul sees and tastes them I become completely changed and forget all sorrow and perplexity. And what I see and hear in the vision wells from my soul as from a spring; but the spring remains, none the less, inexhaustible and full. . . . In myself I find no certainty of power. I stretch out my hands to God, like a feather freed from any weight and carried by the wind; by him I shall be sustained.¹¹

In this avowal, when translated into the language of modern analysis, at least four further characteristics of mystical experience seem to me to be hinted at.

First, a particular density and compactness of all experience: as Hildegard records, she experiences in her vision a diversity of insights in *one* instant and, in the same instant, remembers, and becomes conscious too that she can now completely grasp and explain them to herself. Although these are sketchy and unschooled intimations, yet Hildegard's picture gives one a certain notion of what modern psychology would describe as the peculiar contraction and stratification of intuitive and highly emotional thinking, and of what Jakob Boehme once

11. *Ibid.*, 333, 332.

called being caught in an intellectual downpour.¹² Memories, observations, and conscious interpretations of the observed and remembered are, then, squeezed together in one moment.

But for Hildegard, it is not only a question of the simultaneous flowing together of experiences which are remembered and take on meaning in the same instant; there is also the closest interweaving of the various sense organs. As Hildegard is never tired of certifying, she both sees and hears her visions in one. The lightning flames which she sees are also words. What she hears and sees are not connected merely accidentally or by association; they transmit the same expressive meanings. Modern psychology has recognized the possibility of this consonance of the various senses and considers it entirely legitimate to speak of many-colored noises or loud, shrill colors. In poetry, particularly in romantic poetry, and in mystical insights, this conscious interweaving and interworking of the various sense organs plays a central role.

Along with the density and the profusion of the contents of her experiences, Hildegard points no less emphatically, however, to the continuous inadequacy, the incommensurability of all symbolic mystical expression. In her view, even the strongest and richest mystical expression falls quite flat and short in relation to the overwhelming richness of what has to be expressed. Of course the scientist and, even more, the scientific historian are often conscious that their depictions of natural or historical events can never do full justice to the complexity of reality. But the scientist can console himself by admitting that he purposely offers only parts or methodologically abstracted surface projections of an infinitely rounded totality, and that by this limitation he is, at least, awarded some type of higher precision and exactitude in his understanding of nature and man. The poet, however, and even more the mystic, who wish to penetrate the *coulisses* and the inner essence of reality must become aware that, despite the variegated richness of their means of expression, despite all that their interpretation of reality can bring to light, this reality itself, the source from which they create, remains itself completely inexhaustible.

Even more strangely, hand in hand with the active overflow of his experiences goes the fundamental feeling of the great mystic that he is only passively following a higher inspiration, and that he is merely the

12. *Theosophische Sendbriefe* (Amsterdam, 1682), p. 58: *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by K. W. Schiebler (Leipzig, 1831-1847) VII, 397.

mouthpiece of stronger and superior powers. Although the mystic in the act of knowing instantaneously observes, remembers, and interprets in an intensified degree, although his sense organs work together particularly closely and he makes no distinction between what he sees and what he hears, nevertheless, he remains more conscious than the scientist of the inexhaustibility of what he wishes to depict; and he feels himself to be much less active than the scientist. Even more than the poet, the mystic in no wise believes that he thinks through his own power or arbitrarily; he sees himself driven forward in his knowledge by greater and unknown forces. He lives fully only when he is under the spell of these powers.

Even an avowed atheist like Friedrich Nietzsche speaks expressly of inspiration in those places where his philosophy takes on mystical tendencies.¹³ But neither Nietzsche nor any believing Christian or heathen has been able to describe the phenomenon of inspiration any more concisely or simply than Hildegard: "I stretch out my hands to God, like a feather freed from any weight and carried by the wind; by Him I shall be sustained."¹⁴

Finally, however, after referring to the abundance and the limitations and constraints of mystical thinking, Hildegard speaks, toward the end of her letter to Guibert, of still another characteristic of mysticism which is often overlooked and, in any case, does not belong to the necessary attributes of mystical thought. Nevertheless, not only Hildegard, but also the theosophical-mystical thinking of Jakob Boehme and many of his followers, gives this attribute passionate expression: they are convinced that it is necessary to have a knowledge of evil as well as a knowledge of good.

13. See *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. by Oscar Levy (New York, 1896-1930), xvii, 101 f.: "Has anyone at the end of the nineteenth century any distinct notion of what poets of a stronger age understood by the word inspiration? . . . If one had the smallest vestige of superstition left in one, it would hardly be possible completely to set aside the idea that one is the mere incarnation, mouthpiece, or medium of an almighty power. The idea of revelation, in the sense that something which profoundly convulses and upsets one becomes suddenly visible and audible with indescribable certainty and accuracy—describes the simple fact. . . . The involuntary nature of the figures and the similes is the most remarkable thing; one loses all perception of what is imagery and metaphor; everything seems to present itself as the readiest, the truest and simplest means of expression."

14. *Analecta Sacra*, viii, 332: "Manus meas ad Deum prorigo quatenus velut pena quae omni gravidine virium caret et quae per ventum volat, ab ipso sustinear."

The seraphic withdrawal from all earthly cares, the forgetting, and even the denial of all evil and all guilt, the enjoyment of obvious goodness and beauty in unity with God—all this has often gained the upperhand in mystical thought, and it has especially attracted preachers and religious souls thirsting for mere edification. Hildegard of Bingen, however, shows here, as in her numerous writings on plants, animals, mountains, rivers, and stars, a far greater will toward realism. It is astonishing with what realistic and pitiless observation she paints, for example, the psychology of avarice as it expresses itself in refined self-seeking, which plumes itself on never being a thief or robber and yet, with ruthless craftiness, arranges to have everything fall into its lap.¹⁵ And it is in this vein that she admonishes the monk Guibert, with a fearless insight into the immoral harshness of existence:

Fix your regard on the eagle, who soars up to the clouds on both wings. (See Rev. of St. John, 12:14). Should he injure one, he must remain seated on the earth and, no matter how much he would like to, could not fly. Mankind, too, flies on two wings, the wing of reason, the right wing which is the knowledge of good, and the left wing, the knowledge of evil. And the knowledge of evil must serve the knowledge of good, must sharpen and direct it and make it wise in all things.¹⁶

True wisdom, according to Hildegard, is closed to those who overlook evil or choose to regard it as not present. They must crouch on the ground like an eagle with a wounded wing.

Even today there are many ethicists and sociologists who cannot take seriously a consistent intellectual treatment of evil. They believe, in a lighthearted, optimistic fashion that the human reason has only to direct its attention to the good and the successful, the harmonious and happy, in order to master terror and suffering. Hildegard of Bingen certainly sees deeper when she recognizes evil as a power which should never be ignored, and when she considers it completely impossible to soar to wisdom without the most extensive possible understanding of evil.

In the preceding remarks, I have not had the slightest intention of recommending a "Back to Hildegard of Bingen" movement. Her mystical medicine, developed in her *Causae et curae*, or her *Physica, subtili-*

15. *Ibid.*, 187; Liber vitae meritorum, pars v, § 8: "Ego insipiens non sum. . . . Ad me omnia rapio, et in sinum meum omnia colligo," etc.

16. *Ibid.*, 333.

tatum diversarum naturarum creaturarum libri novem, her grotesque accounts of exotic animals, and the fantastic methods of healing she recommends for the greatest variety of disease—all of this, seen from the present, has an almost comic effect and, in any case, is of interest only to the historian of culture or of medicine. But her letter to the monk Guibert of Gembloux, with its valuable intimations on the essence of mysticism, her mystical *carmina*, and many other mystical ideas set forth in uncommonly powerful and expressive language, mark her without question as one of the great lonely cultural landmarks at the entrance to the German Middle Ages.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Navaho. By CLYDE KLUCKHOHN and DOROTHEA LEIGHTON. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946. xx, 258 pp. \$4.50.

The Navaho is a book which should fill a longfelt need. The understanding of the Navaho Indians as a tribe suffers under a tremendous weight of scattered, unassimilated, difficult material, which has never been thoughtfully appraised. The main reason for this condition is the unusual character of the tribal culture, particularly the religion, which has bases entirely different from our own and, therefore, to be ascertained only by deep probing. In addition to this, the Navaho, a people whose very appearance is romantic, live in an attractive setting accessible to the traveling American. Such books as exist for the layman are consequently written from a superficial point of view repeating ad nauseam what Washington Matthews knew in 1900. Drs. Kluckhohn and Leighton have attempted to correct the impression given by such works. They have given us a readable over-all picture of the tribe, their emphasis being on the problems of the Navaho at the present time (1942-44), their aim being "to steer a middle course between economic and psychological determinism" (p. xix). They emphasize the importance of a viewpoint which is sufficiently versatile to include the economic, psychological, social, and religious premises of the Navaho, all of which are, of course, interrelated.

The authors accomplish this picture by giving a brief account of various facets of Navaho life: historical ("The Past of the People"), economic ("Land and Livelihood"), social ("Living Together," and "The People and the World around Them"), the religious (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), linguistic ("The Tongue of the People"), and their own final interpretation of all of this, which they call "The Navaho View of Life."

Although the main interest of the book is the effect of white culture upon the Navaho and what to do about it, the treatment of this subject differs from the more usual studies in acculturation in giving a sound background of Navaho culture and thought. This stress shows the concern of the authors for the future of the Navaho, and throughout the book I get the impression that they consider the vast efforts of the U. S. Government from 1934-44 largely a failure. During this period incredible sums of money were spent in the Navaho country for many reasons, most of which were bound up with our own economic troubles

(particularly, "made work"). This is a subject to which volumes might be devoted. The book here under review suggests this problem and some of the reasons for the relative failure of the numerous proposals and projects undertaken which left the Navaho a different people from what they were in 1933.

The brief outline of the book and the authors' purposes should whet the appetite of anyone who has even the sketchiest interest in the tribe. He will be interested in the Navaho's ethical ideas, in his world view, which is, after all, what holds the whole culture together and causes resistance to foreign ideas. He will find the belief animistic, an assurance that all elements of the universe have supernatural power which man attracts by observing prescribed order, or exorcises by a similar technique. The basis of this procedure is sympathetic magic, its inverse is sorcery. Over and above these basic beliefs, and the end to which all Navaho strive, is a universal harmony which manifests itself primarily in good health and well-being. All these beliefs are inextricably bound up with disease and, therefore, in the white man's experience, with medical practice.

To point out one of the main difficulties in understanding Navaho assumptions and the conclusions which they reach, the authors include a chapter of only thirty-three pages on "The Navaho Tongue." The language is, by all odds, the greatest barrier to rapport between White and Navaho. This chapter is interesting almost because of its peculiarity, an odd selection of important characteristics of the language. I am not able to judge of the chapter's success, but I am told by some who have read it that it is illuminating. The amusing sketches and diagrams must aid greatly in its total effect. The importance of this chapter lies in the viewpoint that it is not hopeless for the white person to use the language, and that the psychological rewards are more than worth the small effort demanded. My own opinion would be that much more and much simpler implementation would be necessary, for the available language materials are in a very foggy state.

There is a major error which should be mentioned, since the veriest layman knows the usual place of the sexes in the houses, especially during ceremonies. The men customarily sit on the south side, the women at the north instead of the reverse, as the book has it (p. 46). This must be one of the mistakes which somehow sneak into copy in a

way as mysterious as the magical appearance of the Navaho Talking God. Another which touches one of my most sensitive spots is a quotation from my own book using "dieties" (p. 156), a word which is in my work and elsewhere in this work properly spelled. And since this little paragraph is devoted to quibbling I cannot resist mention of the introductory remark, "The anglicized spelling with an *h* instead of *j* is followed in this book because it has become standard anthropological usage. . . ." Anyone who has tried to work with any of the accounts knows he cannot win on a little point like this, editors differing as they do, not only from series to series, but also in the same series and even in the same work. The anthropologist can hardly omit "The Navajo Indian Service"—many people consider the government more authoritative than the anthropologists—and indeed our authors themselves have "Navaho" and "Navajo" in the same usage on the same page (86). This is one of those perennial subjects on which nothing but a sense of humor can avail, especially since this spelling does not matter anyway.

The Navaho as a book is unusual in still another respect. With few exceptions the photos are excellent and, above all, functional—those facing page 13 are magnificent. Most ethnological volumes could save the space and expense of the pictures they include, since they tell the reader nothing at all and indicate that their writers and editors are completely blind to the tremendous development of photographic ideals and techniques in our own culture. There seems to be a tacit agreement among anthropologists that anything amusing cannot be scientific. This book is deadly serious in most respects, but the photos here and there bring out an outstanding characteristic of the Navaho, that he is a jolly, relatively carefree person who takes a great joy in life.

I am greatly relieved to have this book to recommend and regret that space forbids more detailed discussion.

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The Folktale. By STITH THOMPSON. New York: Dryden Press, 1946. x, 510 pp. \$6.00.

Professor Thompson is one of that small group of scholars who devote their time to folklore. He has spent years on folktale types and motifs. He has perfected a technique for the classification of narrative

elements in fairy tales, household tales or *Märchen*, and has applied the same technique to the classification of North American Indian stories.¹ This is his first general book. But he shows here as elsewhere that narrative elements have a sort of existence of their own. They persist through time and occur in almost identical form in widely separated locales. Furthermore, the elements are often transmitted as units. He, and others who have worked with similar materials, therefore recognize a precise literary form composed of narrative elements—the folktale.

In these days of exaggerated book titles, it is a relief to turn to a volume with a title which describes the contents exactly. Professor Thompson discusses, with varying detail, all aspects of the folktale, yet he seldom deviates from his subject into the more widely recognized field of mythology or folklore. He has worked mainly in the oral tradition, and he deals with the folktale. Perhaps it is because it attempts an excursion into the broader field of study that Part One of the book is the weakest. Its eight pages form a slight introduction designed to show the universality of the folktale and to define its forms.

Parts Two and Three are taken up with discussions of the folktale "From Ireland to India," and "In a Primitive Culture: North American Indian." These parts cover well over half of the book and are based upon his earlier classifications. Many new relationships and historical or geographical connections are also suggested. The significance of the folktale comes out here with peculiar force. Literary traditions go back for almost 5,000 years in the Indo-European area from Ireland to India, and oral traditions have been gathered with various degrees of thoroughness in all nations. Distinctions between mythology and cosmology, between folklore and literature, have often been based upon the differences said to be inherent in these literary and oral traditions. Professor Thompson's whole treatment tends to minimize such differences and, by indirection, to deny them. Folktales appear under either guise, and some of them can be traced back over several millenia in written records. Our knowledge of all but a few contemporary tales naturally depends upon the written word. But it can be shown, over and over again, that oral tales are written down and that written tales

1. *Types of the Folk-Tale*. Antti Aarne's *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* translated and enlarged (Helsinki, 1928).

Motif-Index of Folk-Literature (Helsinki, 1932-1936).

Tales of the North American Indians (Cambridge, Mass.), 1929.

are read and told. It has never been demonstrated that the processes of composition are inherently different in either case.

India is perhaps the best area in the world in which to investigate the give and take between literary and oral traditions, to examine the folktale as a living form. Yet the careful attention given parts of Europe by students of the folktale has not yet been duplicated in the Indian field. This forms a serious gap in the Indo-European material, of which Professor Thompson is fully aware. Part of the difficulty has been that methods of collecting oral tales have been particularly deficient there. Certainly the wealth of material available has hardly been sampled, yet some of the most careful work in folklore has been done on the literary traditions of India by scholars of Oriental languages. Since Professor Thompson nowhere refers to them, it may be well to call the attention of the reader to the studies made by Morris Bloomfield and his followers, especially to the excellent methodology used in the volume on *Walking on the Water*, by William Norman Brown.

Plans are already underway for the classification of Indian folktales. Professor Thompson has himself taken one of the first steps in this direction by drawing up a Motif-Index and a Type and Motif Analysis of recently collected Kota materials from the Nilgiri Hills.² However, in applying this technique of classification to a living oral tradition, difficulties are encountered which are also felt by anyone conversant with the oral tradition in either the European or North American Indian fields. Folktales or their elements have been shown to exist through time, and over space, but the classification which reveals this fact seems to lose much of its fruitfulness when applied to the analysis of a complete tradition, whether oral or literary. Religious attitudes or beliefs, conceptual schemes, psychological motives, cultural emphases, all may be lost or concealed by the type and motif analysis of narrative elements.

For example, a recurrent tale typed as "The Monster with his Heart in the Egg" is concerned with an ogre who keeps his heart in an egg, and who can, therefore, be killed only by destroying the egg. In Asia, it is often the soul of the ogre which is thus separated from his body, and the receptacle is generally a bird or insect. The reviewer has obtained

2. In M. B. Emeneau, *Kota Texts*, Parts I-IV, University of California Publications in Linguistics (Berkeley, 1944-1946).

variants from a Bengali Mohammedan and a Punjabi Sikh. The soul of the ogre is housed in a parrot in both variants, and in both of them the limbs of the ogre break one at a time before he dies. But the feeling of the tales is quite different. In the Sikh version, the ogre breaks his limbs rushing through the woods in a storm to save the parrot. His arms break first, then his legs. He has almost reached his goal when the hero seizes the bird and kills it. It is nip and tuck to the end, and the hero seems to feel a grudging respect for his adversary. In the Bengali version, the hero holds the bird, breaks first one leg and then the other. The ogre staggers, falls, pulls himself on. The hero breaks the wings (arms) one by one. The ogre's suffering, however justified, is dwelt upon with relish. Only then does the hero kill the parrot, and the ogre. The apparent sadism of the Bengali version is enhanced by gesture and tone; the Sikh version reduces such interest to the bare minimum required by the tale.

Major contrasts of this sort are frequent between folktales which would almost necessarily be classified together by type and motif analysis. Among some American Indian groups a tale may hold the deepest religious significance so that it can be told only at certain seasons and then with great awe, it may explain the genesis of the people themselves. Yet the tale in hardly distinguishable version, according to type analysis, may be merely a casual, amusing anecdote in another Indian group. The process by which folktales assume, or lose, religious meaning inevitably concerns students of religions and of other comparative cultural phenomena. When he deals with deeply rooted mythologies, the folklorist only impoverishes his material if he limits himself to narrative elements alone.

Yet narrative elements do persist, they change yet retain a recognizable core, they are carried from region to region—they must be reckoned with. Limitations of the type-motif analysis and classification have been stressed here because precise tools often have great appeal. Sometimes their appeal is so great that they are used for purposes for which they were never designed. Professor Thompson is interested in the classification of narrative elements, in the identification of the folktale. His tool fits his job. But folklorists use other tools when they come at other problems or choose to arrive at other processes.

In Part Four of the book, Professor Thompson shows that he him-

self is not blinded by his aims and methods. He covers in this section what has been done and is being done toward "Studying the Folktale." Especially in Chapter 1, "Theories of the Folktale," he handles appreciatively methods of approach which are rather far removed from his own. This chapter furnishes, incidentally, a valuable short history of the study of folklore and should prove of great worth to teachers and students alike. One wishes that it had been expanded. Up-to-date accounts of development in folktale study are likewise included, and the volume ends with elaborate bibliographies and an excellent index.

Somewhat to the surprise of this reader, the book carries theoretical, even philosophical, stimulation. Perhaps this is because it presents a great deal of material on a single theme. Certainly Professor Thompson makes no attempt to generalize: he avoids the broader view as if by instinct. But he knows whereof he speaks. In such a setting, the folktale assumes real significance to theory by sheer weight of evidence. The folktale is borne by story-telling and story-enjoying humans, and only by them, yet its existence is apparently not dependent upon any particular person or group of persons. It can hardly be said to be either coexistent or coterminous with its bearer of the moment. One can almost forgive the folklorist for sometimes slipping into mysticism about his folktale.

Social philosophers will recognize the same problem here which confronts them in handling the culture concept. Anthropologists have dealt for some time with folklore as a part of culture, and as such it has thus far successfully defied definition. Culture is a little like electricity—you have to see it work to believe it. And it does seem to have a peculiar existence beyond that of its bearer or carrier. The analogy may, naturally, be taken too far. It is true, however, that we do not yet know just what culture is. Or how it works. Yet it is.

The theoretical problem thus posed is being attacked today largely through an examination of process. The processes by which culture is transmitted, and the processes by which it, and other factors, may determine behavior, are receiving more and more attention. Workers seem to be gradually dividing into two camps: those who study cultural process for the greater understanding of man and his world which it may yield, and those who study it in order to direct or to change man's way of living and of behaving. These two camps are not antithetical.

They can, and do, work together. Both of them might find more food for thought than they had anticipated in the concept of the folktale implicit in Professor Thompson's book.

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The Doctrine of the Limitation of God in Plato. By CULBERT GEROW RUTENBER. King's Crown Press, New York. 1946. 115 pp. \$1.50.

The oldest and most effective device in the history of education is the example. The Greeks employed it constantly in epic, lyric, and elegiac poetry, as well as in oratory and history, recommending for imitation especially the gods and heroes of mythology, for to become like these models was the surest method of achieving *areté*. Plato, with a more sublime concept of *areté* than any previously known in Greek history, substituted for the conventional models other patterns for imitation, notably the Idea of the Good, and God Himself. To become like God was, as Werner Jaeger has pointed out, "the highest *areté* attainable by man."¹

The purpose of Mr. Rutenber's book is to study the doctrine of the imitation of God in the dialogues of Plato, tracing the development and increasing importance of this concept, and indicating its relationship to other "major areas of Platonic thought." In so doing, he is obliged to consider especially the relationship between the doctrine of the imitation of God by souls and the better-known Platonic theory of the imitation of forms by things, and finally to work out the relation of God Himself to the forms—a task which Plato in his dialogues never undertook. Mr. Rutenber admits that relatively few passages in the Platonic dialogues refer to the doctrine of the imitation of God, but he makes out a good case for the importance of this theory both to the philosophy of Plato himself and to later theology, pagan and Christian. The second part of his contention will be supported by a moment's reflection upon the persistence of the doctrine (through whatever variations) from the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ of Plotinus to the *Imitatio Christi* ascribed to Thomas à Kempis.

Beginning with a study of the nature of the divine, Mr. Rutenber

1. *Paideia* (New York, 1943) II, 287.

reviews the arguments for and against the identification of God with the Idea of the Good, and ultimately adopts the theory that Plato's God is not identical with the Idea of the Good, nor with any other Idea, but is a divine soul, which derives its reality from participation in the form of Life or Motion, and is, therefore, probably inferior to the forms. There follows a useful study of the terms by which Plato indicates imitation. The conclusion is that ὁμοίωσις and παραπλησία are used with no significant distinction, and that, furthermore, the terms ὁμοίωσις, μέθεξις, and μίμησις are completely interchangeable, when used to describe the relation of a copy to its original.

Chapter III deals with a fundamental problem: If man, in common with all other things, must imitate the forms, and God is not, after all, to be identified with the Good, what place can there be for the imitation of God? This question immediately brings up the whole problem of the relation of God to the forms. Mr. Rutenber begins by pointing out that, whereas the forms are of primary interest in the work of Plato's middle period, the later dialogues are more and more concerned with the nature and function of God. A concise analysis of the growth of the idea of God in Plato's dialogues is welcome in this section of the argument. Plato's interest in theology is rightly connected with his interest in ζήνησις, which is also a feature of the later dialogues, and this interest in turn probably grew out of "Plato's desire to bridge the gap between static forms and the things that resemble them" (p. 30). But God in the later dialogues does not replace the forms, for they continue to be supreme. Rather, according to Mr. Rutenber, "God is to some extent intermediate between the realm of static forms and that of changing things."² To the extent that God owes His existence as a living soul to His participation in the form of Motion or Life, He is probably less "real" than the forms. As for the relation of the imitation of God to the imitation of the forms, there is no conflict, because God, Himself a soul, self-moving, perfect in all the virtues, is the model for imitation by other souls, which are also living and moving, and which must perfect themselves in the virtues. God, that is, "supplies for imitation the synthesis in one self of all that man is to achieve" (p. 37). Thus Plato can require man to imitate, not the form of "manness," in his effort to attain *areté*, but rather God, for He

2. Or as Friedrich Solmsen has put it, His place is "on the boundary between Being and Becoming" *Plato's Theology* (Ithaca, New York, 1942), p. 92.

is the embodiment (or "ensoulment") of all the virtues which comprise *aretê*, and is in a sense "man's larger self" (p. 38).

Nor is man the only imitator of God. Whatever else in the universe is possessed of the principle of movement (and is therefore by definition a living soul) will imitate God, albeit unconsciously. It is chiefly in the possession of wholeness, measure, and order that the cosmos reflects the goodness of God. The most divine part of the cosmos is the World Soul, but each lesser soul also shares in divinity and likeness to God. Even the body of the universe, inferior though it is, imitates God so far as is possible. Mr. Rutenber traces the hierarchy of the divine from the fixed stars down to man himself, suggesting to what extent each category is capable of imitating God. Even irrational animals, plants, and inanimate objects are shown to imitate God in such aspects as wholeness, proportion, and internal order.

The author is obviously aware of the danger of being more dogmatic than Plato, and in general avoids imposing too much rigidity upon Plato's fluid and often poetic theological concepts, yet it seems to this reviewer that he sometimes tries too hard to bring together and fit into a coherent system all that Plato says about God. Thus he fails to distinguish sharply enough at all times among the different concepts of God which Plato himself did not try to reconcile, for example, the God of *Phaedrus* and *Laws*, who imparts life and movement, and the God of *Timaeus*, who is more closely concerned with order. Hence the reader is occasionally troubled by the attempt to identify such concepts as the Demiurge and the World Soul, which on the evidence of the dialogues themselves cannot safely be equated. On page 16, for example, Mr. Rutenber suggests that the Demiurge of *Timaeus* may be part of the World Soul, more specifically "the imaginative symbol for the intellect of the World Soul." But the only World Soul mentioned in *Timaeus* is that created by the Demiurge. Surely he is not part of his own creation, and there is nothing to support the view that in *Timaeus* (or elsewhere) Plato conceives of two World Souls, one giving rise to the other. It is only fair to add that Mr. Rutenber himself later thinks better of this theory and concedes that in the relation of the Demiurge to the World Soul, "Plato has left us with another unresolved problem on our hands" (p. 42).

Especially useful are the two chapters which deal with the imitator of God, as the imitator is "in himself" and as he is "to the world." In

the first of these chapters, the author traces the process of education which enables the philosopher to contemplate the Idea of the Good and thus achieve the greatest possible likeness to God, and then proceeds to analyze the character of the man who imitates God and applies to his own life his knowledge of the mind of God. The second of these chapters attempts to solve the problem of the value of the contemplative as opposed to the active life.

In the later dialogues, in which Plato somehow decreases the distance between soul and body, forms and things, and grants more validity to the senses and emotions, he also concedes more importance to practical activity. Mr. Rutenber asserts that the reason for this shift in emphasis is to be found in the doctrine of the imitation of God. In support of this sweeping claim, he shows that in the *Laws* especially Plato stresses the role of God in maintaining the moral order and the need for man to co-operate with God in spreading virtue through statecraft. The imitation of God is shown to require the active as well as the contemplative life, since Plato's God Himself (unlike Aristotle's) is an active, moral soul. To this same doctrine Mr. Rutenber traces several other differences between the *Laws* and the *Republic*, notably the tendency in the later work to make the ruler look for his pattern, not to the forms, but to the laws already established, or to God, especially as manifested in the heavens; the more inclusive educational policy of the *Laws*; the use of popular religion for the purposes of statecraft; and the admission of poetry to the State. Especially in the case of the last two differences, the connection with the doctrine in question seems exceedingly tenuous. It appears that the imitation of God is held responsible for the changes in Plato's thought chiefly because it is characteristic of God to utilize everything possible for the welfare of the Whole. If, therefore, Plato salvages popular religion or poetry in the *Laws*, the reason must be sought in the doctrine of the imitation of God. On the basis of the evidence presented, the verdict must be "Not Proven."

Equally questionable is the attempt to attribute to this same cause Plato's interest in astronomy in the later dialogues. No one would deny that Plato explicitly requires the work of God in the universe to serve as a model for rulers in the interpretation of the laws, but this is not the sole, nor even the chief, explanation for the "increased emphasis on astronomy in the *Laws* and in the *Epinomis* as compared with the

Republic" (p. 102). Plato became interested in astronomy as soon as he had reached that point in his philosophical development at which he recognized Movement as a phase of Being, without, however, abandoning his earlier insistence upon the superiority of Permanence and Regularity. The heavenly bodies, with their ordered, regular movements, supplied precisely the example that he needed to illustrate Permanence in Movement, and it is for this reason, as well as the (to him) fascinating connection of the stars with mathematics, that we find Plato in the later dialogues repeatedly turning to the firmament and singing its praises.

It is a pity that a book otherwise lucid and valuable should be marred by a few infelicities in style and a great many misprints. The seriousness of Mr. Rutenber's diction is frequently impaired by the use of contractions, for example: it's (p. 6), doesn't (pp. 69, 98), didn't (pp. 73, 84), while there are occasional errors in grammar, such as the expression on page 107, "the imitation of souls to God." Printers' errors, in both Greek and English, are numerous. Most distressing of the former is the substitution of omicron for omega in both σωφροσύνη and σωφρονεῖν (p. 72), but the reader's eye is also caught by misplaced breathings on εἰκασία (p. 61) and αὐτῷ (p. 94), and the omission of accents on ἡδονῆς (p. 74) and ἀεὶ (p. 77). One misprint in the English text ("activity" for "inactivity," p. 80) upsets the meaning of the sentence. Others merely cost the reader a moment's pause. Among them are "solves" for "solve" (p. 22), "Dionysus" for "Dionysius" (p. 74), "Law" for "Laws" (p. 106), and "Urlich" for "Ulrich" (p. 112).

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Le Baptême de Feu. By CARL-MARTIN EDSMAN (*Acta Semin. Neotest. Upsal.* 9). Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 1946. 237 pp.

Taking as his point of departure the statement of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16) that the Coming One would baptize with the Spirit and with fire, Edsman investigates, in this monograph, the role and significance of fire in early Christianity. Various mythical, magical, and mystical conceptions are found combined, such as the river of fire

surrounding the celestial city, the flaming sword at the gate of Paradise, and the universal conflagration at the end of the age. Varying functions are consequently attributed to fire: it gives life and deifies; it purifies or punishes; it destroys. Gnostic conceptions of the ascent of the soul to Paradise make the passage of the river of fire the last ordeal and purification of the soul.

The stream of fire before the divine throne in Daniel 7:10 plays a large part, but the eschatological application of it introduces further complications. Already in Jewish sources the righteous bathe in the stream of fire flowing from beneath the throne of God, and so are regenerated, but the same fire also falls on the heads of the wicked in Gehenna. Sometimes these ideas are taken quite literally; both Jewish and Christian mystics, however, spiritualize them. The new power of the Spirit in the Christian's soul is characterized as fire, and the regenerate soul is said to have become fire or light. A long section on Ephraem Syrus, with much direct quotation, shows how these conceptions of destruction, punishment, and purification are combined in a way revealing primary dependence upon late Judaism, but also some degree of direct Irano-Babylonian influence.

Through the conception of baptism as an anticipation of the believer's experience after death, the eschatological ideas connected with the baptism of fire are brought into the cult, and others also are added to them. Since fire is not used in the sacrament of baptism, its connection with the rite can only be symbolic and mythological; and since trial and punishment have no part in baptism, it is the function of fire as life-giving and purifying which finds application here. Rites with fire are found in early Christianity, to be sure, but only in heretical groups under pagan influence. Some sects, indeed, rejected water baptism and made much of the baptism of fire as a symbol of spiritual rebirth, but it is not certain that they had a cultic rite of baptism by fire. In other groups baptism by water was regarded as a visible rite which was accompanied by the baptism of fire as an inward, spiritual experience.

In Egyptian and Syrian ascetic mysticism much use was made of the idea of the pillar of fire uniting earth and heaven. Saints had visions of God or Christ in the form of a pillar of fire or light. At baptism Christ appeared as a pillar of light, and the candidate became a pillar

of light. Sometimes it was a cross of light which was seen, or the pillar was surmounted by a cross.

The association of these conceptions with baptism leads Edsman to favor the explanation of the Syriac use of the root *'md* for baptism as being connected with the noun meaning pillar, and as having the meaning erect, establish, fortify. Later on, however, he points out, in connection with the mythology of the pearl, that the same root appears also in the word for a pearl-diver, and the same verb means either to dive or to be baptized. This would seem to offer a much closer and more natural connection than the idea of the pillar or of standing erect.

The mixture, in varying proportions, of speculation, mysticism, and magical rites characteristic of Neoplatonism is found also in Gnosticism. In the *de rebaptismate* a rite of baptism by fire is attributed to the followers of Simon Magus. Popular interest would account for the adoption of similar practices among more or less orthodox groups within the Church. In this connection Edsman recalls the rite of the sacred fire at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, but speaks only of references to it by early pilgrims without even mentioning the survival of the practice to the present day. A medieval Armenian chronicle is cited for a baptism of fire following the baptism of water at the feast of Epiphany. Since the baptism of the believer naturally follows the pattern of Jesus' baptism, it is not surprising to find a legend, going back as far as Justin, to the effect that, when Jesus was baptized, fire was seen above the water of the Jordan.

Among the mythological ideas associated with baptism, one of the most interesting is the mythology of the pearl, to which the closing section of Edsman's book is devoted. The basis of this is the idea that the pearl is formed in some way by a union of fire and water. In some texts the pearl is Christ, in others it is baptism or the great blessing found in baptism. These conceptions appear in the sources together with the baptism of fire and the pillar of fire.

As in his other works, Edsman has gone through an immense amount of material for this study. Patristic, Jewish, Gnostic, Mandaean, Manichaean, later Greek, Syriac, and Coptic sources have been combed for evidence bearing on the whole subject of fire in cult, eschatological speculation, and mystical symbolism. Edsman is cautious in tracing relationships, contenting himself for the most part with recording

facts. For his industry, patience, and care in doing this we must be grateful to him. Whatever fault specialists in patristics or the other areas traversed may find with his work, a reader only slightly acquainted with these fields sees little to criticize.

For one whose primary interest is the understanding of the Bible, a perennial question raised by all such studies emerges here again. How far can conceptions appearing in post-biblical sources help us to understand the original meaning of the biblical texts with which they are associated? Were any of the varied ideas Edsman has recorded already presupposed in the statement of Matt. 3:11 (Luke 3:16) with which the investigation starts? Edsman does not go into this question, except in so far as he sometimes shows the dependence of this or that document on pagan sources. Unquestionably these documents show us how the Bible was understood by people much nearer than we are to its writers and first readers. In most cases, however, the impression persists that what had been quite different and much simpler in its original intent was later overgrown with a foliage from alien roots. Only through unprejudiced and thorough study, point by point, can we determine whether or how far either alternative is to be accepted. With all due allowance for prejudice and subjective eisegesis, at least one reader leaves such a book as this with renewed wonder at the degree to which both the Old and the New Testament are more congenial to the modern mind than the post-biblical literature, whether Jewish or Christian.

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The Origins of Christian Supernaturalism. By SHIRLEY JACKSON CASE.
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946. viii, 239 pp. \$3.00.

In 1929 Professor Case published *Experience with the Supernatural in Early Times*. This work, now long out of print, he here presents largely rewritten, but with little new material. He argued in the earlier volume that the claim to supernaturalism, far from being original with Christianity, as many of its proponents have urged, bulked large in every ancient religion. After a general introduction (ch. 1), which traces much too rapidly the supernaturalism in the pagan and Jewish

worlds, and its early effect upon Christian ideas, in chapter II, "The Value of Apparitions," he describes how the idea that the dead return from their graves influenced the pagans, in contrast to the opinion of the Jews that "not even God could bring back the spirit that had departed." (He seems to have forgotten the restorations to life affected by both Elijah and Elisha.) Christians had the counterpart to this in their risen Lord, Case says, but he forgets that the Christians insisted that in this resurrection Jesus returned to bodily life, and was not a ghostly apparition.

In chapter III, "Channels of Revelation," he discusses God's revelation of himself, as popularly believed by Jews and pagans, revelations in nature and portents, in a sacred book, in an inspired person or prophet, or by demonic interventions of all sorts. Case shows that each of these survived, somewhat in Jewish form, but more largely in pagan, in Christianity.

In chapter IV, "The Function of Heroic Saviors," the saving deities of all kinds are discussed, dying and rising gods, heroes of all sorts, who were accredited as such not only by their remarkable services to men, but by a story of their supernatural birth. When Paul read this idea, says Case, into Jewish Scripture for the first time to apply it to Jesus, he presented an idea much more acceptable to pagans than to Jews.

In chapter V, "The Human Approach to the Gods," the author gives a very good outline sketch of popular worship in ancient times: its aspiduity, its ubiquity, its range of values from the highest to the lowest, its elaboration of ritual, use of music, temples, groves, sacrifices. He connects it all with Christianity, and concludes that Christianity triumphed "by intensifying and heightening the customary techniques" for reaching the supernatural.

Chapter VI, "Supernatural Protection for Society," is a poorer chapter. It shows that men looked to the supernatural to reflect itself in their government and social security, but the distinctions between the pagan and Jewish elements in this, and their mutual relation, is often quite wrong. The supernatural in government Christianity did not originate but took over.

Chapter VII, "Divine Help for the Individual," discusses the development of personal religion as over against that of society as a whole, for gods who look after the whole can hardly be concerned with the parts, Case argues (at least for paganism). So healing gods and cults arose,

and provision through mysteries for personal immortality. "When Paul substituted Christ for their former heroes," and made Christianity "function as a new mystery religion" (pp. 170 f), he preached a Christianity the pagan world could accept. That Paul did this alone and out of hand seems to me the least probable assumption of the book. It is here that we are forced to look for such a bridge, such a preparation, as I am trying to demonstrate existed in Hellenistic Judaism. This problem, and Hellenistic Judaism for more than casual allusion, do not exist for Professor Case at all.

Chapter VIII, "The Destiny of the Soul," describes the concepts of the future life in greater detail. For so brief a survey this chapter is excellent on the pagan side, but quite inadequate on the Christian. It is not suggested, as I think it should be, that the Orphic hell survived in Christianity as purgatory, alongside the Persian hell of eternal banishment and torment with the Prince of Evil and his angels.

"The Suppression of the Mind" (chapter IX) depicts how in paganism the popular level of stupidity came to swamp the art, literature, music, rhetoric, and education of ancient civilization. These refinements had all gone into Christianity, but, as in paganism so in Christianity, they lost their original freshness and power, until all intellectual activity came to be subordinated to the supreme content of revelation. And so, in the closing chapter, this victory is shown to have been complete. The development of Christian civilization, the return of civilization, so to speak, as it is hastily sketched in later centuries, was step by step, even in Anselm and Aquinas, a process of getting away from this dominance of revelation and of restoring the human mind to its proper dignity. At last, in recent years the truly fundamental element in Christianity, its genuine contribution, has been rediscovered, namely that the true Christian religion is not supernaturalism at all but "a moral and spiritual way of life." This Case called in the Preface "the original genius of Christianity."

Such a sudden resurrection of the old *Wesen* of Harnack is, it now appears, the real purpose of the book. Case is an unredeemed "liberal" Christian. It is rather refreshing to find one still articulate.* There must be a great deal of liberal Christianity preached in many pulpits, but it has gone out of style in print. It never did appeal to the mass of Chris-

* Unfortunately, since this review was written, liberalism has suffered a great loss in the death of Professor Case.

tians, deeply as it influenced even the Catholic Church, and beneficent as it has been in directing all branches of Christianity to consider social and ethical problems afresh. But like those who would reduce the "original genius of Christianity" to *agapé*, the old liberals who would see it all in "a moral and spiritual way of life" have to distort history to make their point. It was one of the anomalies of the past century that the greatest Christian historian of all time, Harnack, should have abandoned all sense of historical reality to extract from the documents of Christianity his liberal ethical *Wesen*. There are no records of a Jesus, or of any other early Christians, who abandoned supernaturalism, gave up the notion that by prayer and divine help one could get food and raiment, health and immortality. Christianity from the first believed in the value of specific rites, in a supernatural Messianic kingdom, and in spiritual ecstasy, so that liberal ethical Christianity can be gleaned even from the Sermon on the Mount only by selection.

One reads Professor Case's book with interest, then, and learns a good deal that is right (and some that is wrong) from it. But, as a whole, it is an example of the same sort of allegory which he despises in the pagans: that is, interpretation of an ancient story, in this case an historical one, to make it tell some strange new thing pleasing to a new way of thinking. As a historian I have no objection to liberal Christianity at all so long as it does not represent itself as teaching "the original genius of Christianity." The same applies, of course, to the newer allegories popularly called Neo-orthodoxy. But probably the day will never come when we can write history without feeling we must use its data to justify our own predilections.

ERWIN R. GOODENOUGH

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The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus. By ALLAN B. WOLTER, O.F.M. (Franciscan Institute Publications, Philosophy Series No. 3). St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1946. xvi, 204 pp. \$2.00.

Of all the great medieval theologians, Duns Scotus is the most formidable for the modern reader, because of the complexity of his terminology and the intricate manner in which he develops his teaching. Despite these barriers, the Scotist metaphysics has exercised a powerful

and continuing influence on many minds, and reveals, to those who acquire an aptitude for reading his works, a vitality and inner unity that is all the more fascinating because of the difficulty of characterizing it as a systematic doctrine. The influence of Scotist ideas is discernible in nearly all segments of modern philosophy, non-scholastic as well as scholastic, extending to the phenomenological school, and to C. S. Pierce, in more recent times.

Fr. Wolter's study is one more attempt to provide a key to the understanding of Scotus' metaphysics, through a systematic discussion of his theory of the transcendentals. The dissertation is well documented, and exhibits a high standard of scholarship, as well as an ability to restate the material in intelligible modern language. In the first part of the study, Fr. Wolter portrays Scotus' general notion of transcendental, in terms of the logical definition of the "transcendental term" and its ontological foundation, and discusses its relation to Scotist ideas of univocity, analogy, and real and formal distinctions. The second part treats of the meaning and function of the concept of *being*, and of the three classes of transcendental attributes of being recognized by Scotus, with emphasis on the part played by these concepts in providing a metaphysical foundation for theology. The basic conception of the character and meaning of Duns' philosophy, which is more or less tacitly assumed by Fr. Wolter as the framework of his exposition, is that of Longpré and the main group of recent Franciscan interpreters of Duns Scotus—the view that Scotus' philosophy is basically Aristotelian, and, like that of St. Thomas Aquinas, relatively autonomous in its relation to the content of revealed Christian theology. The weaknesses and shortcomings of Fr. Wolter's dissertation, in the judgment of this reviewer, arise almost entirely from his acceptance of this interpretation, and from a failure to take adequate account of the fundamental issues raised by Gilson's recent criticism of this view.

The medieval notion of the "transcendental term" stems from two diverse sources. Aristotle recognized certain terms, such as "being" and "one," as falling outside of the classification of determinate modes of signification given in the ten categories, such that these terms have the distinctive property of being predicable of every significant term whatsoever, in virtue of the fact that every term, qua significant, determines some *one* form or manner of *being*. In this sense, a transcendental term is not so called because it signifies anything transcending the class of

things signified by the categorical terms, but only because its manner of signification cuts across the distinctions between modes of signification drawn by the categories. Thomas Aquinas, in his *De veritate*, gave the classic exposition of this type of transcendental, and it does not seem that he recognized, as proper to philosophy, any other type.

Duns Scotus, while recognizing and using this Aristotelian notion of transcendental, combined with it a very different conception, stemming from the Neo-platonist and Augustinian traditions. A transcendental term or concept, in this other sense, is one which applies properly and absolutely to God alone, or to the first eternal principles of all being, though it is applied secondarily and in a relative or "participated" sense to created and temporal things. Such transcendentals include the "pure perfections" or "divine names," such as the term "wise" or "just," and they also include a long series of disjunctive pairs, such as "finite-or-infinite," "necessary-or-contingent," "actual-or-potential," whose basic function is to exhibit and justify the passage from the Aristotelian concept of a transcendental *mode of signification*, to the Augustinian concept of a *transcendent object* of signification. In this way, Duns Scotus' expanded theory of transcendentality effects a transposition of the metaphysics of Aristotle into a highly effective handmaiden of Christian theology.

In his exposition of Scotus' doctrine, Fr. Wolter takes little or no account of this two-fold origin of the Scotist transcendentals, in its bearing on the relation of Duns' metaphysics to that of Aristotle, on the one hand, and to the relation of philosophy to revealed theology, on the other. He intimates, in fact, that the philosophy of Scotus is not of basically different orientation from that of Aquinas, and he recurrently criticizes Gilson's contention to the contrary, without however going to the root of Gilson's position. To the present reviewer, Fr. Wolter's attempt to present Scotus' doctrine as a metaphysical *foundation* for theology, and to set aside Gilson's view of it as metaphysical analysis of the *content* of Christian doctrine, achieves the opposite of what it intends. For the arguments and discussions of Duns Scotus, quoted and expounded by Fr. Wolter, rarely make their appeal to natural evidence, and in most cases derive all their force from the assumption of theological doctrine. Thus, in arguing for the univocity of the concept of being, Scotus' appeal is not to philosophical evidence, but to the fact that *unless* univocity be conceded, God could not be an object of

human knowledge. Duns Scotus is not seeking to establish a theology on the basis of an autonomous philosophy, but rather to exhibit the metaphysical conditions implied by the existence of Christian theology.

One who reads far in Duns Scotus cannot but be struck by the fact that his method is radically different from that used by St. Thomas, or by Aristotle. Whereas these men defined their terms in order to arrive at unambiguous determination of definite problems raised, Duns Scotus consistently raises a multiplicity of problems for the sake of revealing, and exploring, the concepts and meanings through which they have significance as problems. Scotus' work takes on coherence and power, if understood in terms of his conception of the aim and method of metaphysical inquiry. This aim is to reveal, in its richness of aspects, the intelligible content of that to which discourse is referred as to its object; the method is one of dialectical exploration of the implicative relationships in a matrix of statements, as determined by the intrinsic necessities involved in their being significant. It is because of this aim and method that so many of Scotus' discussions, in a manner reminiscent of the later dialogues of Plato, leave the reader in doubt as to the precise resolution of the initial problem, while yet giving him the sense of having penetrated deeply into the meaning of the problem. While for St. Thomas Aquinas, human knowledge is perfected in the act of judgment, for Duns Scotus it is perfected in the act of conception, or of intellectual *apprehension* of being. For this reason, the notions of evidence, and of demonstration, accepted by Aquinas, have little in common with the meaning given to these terms by Duns Scotus. In failing to take account of this radical difference between Scotus' conception of the aim and method of metaphysical inquiry, and that of Aristotle or of St. Thomas, Fr. Wolter is led to present the arguments and discussions of Duns Scotus in a form and context in which they seem to lack most of the power and significance which they possess in Scotus' own presentation.

It would be unjust to criticize Fr. Wolter's study on the ground that his basic conception of Scotist metaphysics differs from that of Gilson, or from that of this reviewer. But where such a fundamental question is in dispute, it would seem fair to expect an author to take account of the issues, and to make explicit the bearing of his own discus-

sions and analyses on these issues. In this respect, and despite its many excellencies, Fr. Wolter's study is disappointing.

ERNEST A. MOODY

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The Russian Religious Mind: Kievan Christianity. By GEORGE P. FEDOTOV. Cambridge, Mass.: The Harvard University Press, 1946. xvi, 438 pp. \$6.00.

This is a very important work, and the Harvard University Press is to be congratulated for publishing it. The author, a distinguished authority, has made a careful study of all the known literary documents which give us information on the religious life and thoughts and feelings of the people of the Kievan period, from the time of the conversion of Vladimir in the tenth century to the Mongol invasion, and attempts from them to picture the ideas of the people of the day. It is the first serious attempt of the kind in English, even though it must be "a kind of preliminary synthesis, even though intuitional or subjective," and the ideas of the author demand the greatest respect.

Undoubtedly the most brilliant chapter is the one on Russian Kenoiticism, with its treatment of Saints Boris and Gleb, the first saints of Kiev, who were honored for their non-resistance to death for political rather than religious reasons, and also of Saint Theodosius as the disciple of the humiliated Christ. The author feels keenly this side of Russian religious thought and is at his best in interpreting it.

His weakest side is his treatment of the contrast between the ideas of Leo the Great and Cyril of Alexandria. Professor Fedotov gives the impression that this was very close to the present distinction between the religion *of* Jesus and the religion *about* Jesus which is so frequently heard in the West. The two ideas were inextricably mixed in Russian thought, as he shows so well, and his attempts to disentangle them, as well as his distinctions between fear and charity, seem somewhat overpressed.

In fact, Professor Fedotov is at his best when presenting the facts about Russian religious thought. As he himself acknowledges, not enough work has been done on Byzantine and Balkan Slavic religious thought to make clear the definite sources of many of the Russian ideas. On the whole, he is rather prejudiced against the Byzantines. He

does not emphasize sufficiently the fact that secular order was preserved by the imperial court and army. Since this was so, there was a natural tendency for monasticism to discard many of the cultural functions that it necessarily took over in the West, where the Church was supreme in the political as well as in the religious field. Yet he admits the great value of the work of the Greek metropolitans of Kiev who did not often abuse their spiritual mission for political purposes.

His remarks on the cultural results of the use of Church Slavonic are interesting and to the point. There can be no doubt that the effort to replace it with the vernacular speech was one of the great works of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, because the language hallowed by tradition and religion seemed to many conservatives the only form possible for writing. Yet the reason for the complete absorption in the limited subject matter translated in Bulgaria can hardly be expressed by such a simple formula. The final answer must be found in the psychology of the Slavs, and that cannot yet be given.

Another point of interest, which Professor Fedotov will undoubtedly treat later, is the difference in the Russian religious thought in Kiev and Moscow. He indicates clearly that, in the north, it was Slav and Finn that determined both Novgorod and Vladimir-Suzdal-Moscow, and that the Finnic element played a much smaller part in Kiev, where the volkhvi rarely attempted to stir up trouble. He notes, also, that the decay in the older idealism came in Vladimir a century before it did in Kiev or elsewhere. It may well be asked, in view of the difference in temper between the two parts of the state, whether we are not dealing with something deeper than externals and have, rather, two distinct peoples bound together only by the relationship of the princes and the Church Slavonic language.

There are few errors in the book, and these are chiefly outside the Russian field. Thus, on page 15, to support his theory of the *rod*, the author says, "Among the European peoples only the Russians, together with the Balkan Slavs, preserved personal patronymic names." This is an exaggeration, for the custom is still preserved in Iceland and is not too far dead in some of the other Scandinavian countries. Yet these defects are only minor, although it is unfortunate that the author's English was not more carefully revised, and that there are so many mistakes due to careless proofreading.

All in all, the volume renders accessible to the student of religious

psychology the salient features of Kievan Christianity. It shows well the wide learning of the author and his breadth of understanding. It opens up new paths for religious research and sets a high standard for future students to reach. It is a book that can be highly recommended for its balanced judgments and its completeness.

CLARENCE A. MANNING

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Road to Reformation: Martin Luther to the Year 1521. By HEINRICH BOEHMER. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946. xiii, 449 pages. \$4.00.

Professors John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Tappert have rendered a great service to English-speaking students of religion in this translation of Boehmer's *Der junge Luther*. They are to be congratulated on two counts. On the one hand, in selecting this particular work for rendition into English, they have chosen a volume of outstanding significance from the standpoint of presenting to the reader an authoritative portrayal of the young Luther. Along with Otto Scheel's *Martin Luther* (Tübingen, 1930), Boehmer's writing stands as a monumental contribution to the field of early-Luther biography and interpretation. And in the second place, congratulations are also in order for the manner of translation. The rendition has been faithful, yet not literal, happily maintaining, above all, that force and lucidity of Boehmer's style which makes reading him such a delight.

In *Road to Reformation* Professor Boehmer tells simply, though not without profundity, the story of Luther's life and development up through the point of his experiences at the Diet of Worms in April, 1521, where, before Church officials and Emperor, he refused his last opportunity to recant, and thus made his final break from the papacy. This is, however, no ordinary biography. In many ways it is a masterpiece.

As a scholarly historian, Professor Boehmer has delved deeply into the vast number of primary sources available for such a study, and has drawn from them a wealth of historical fact, carefully weighed and critically evaluated. This work may, indeed, be said to be the final fruit of a lifetime of Luther research, for it was first published in 1925,

but a short while before the author's death. As a writer of marked ability, Professor Boehmer has skillfully constructed a story of dramatic quality and power, capable of catching the imagination of the reader and of leading him into an attentive appreciation of the events depicted. Actually, this volume, though based upon thorough and critical research, was written to appeal not primarily to Luther-scholars, but rather to the general reading public. And as a theologian of no little stature, Professor Boehmer has presented clearly and succinctly a picture of Luther's religious experience and theological development in his formative years, tracing his thought from its beginning point in his nominalist heritage up through the formulation of the evangelical message which lay at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. Here the author has moved with keen insight and fine understanding and, within the limits made necessary by the nature of his undertaking, has ably presented the theological transformation which took place as Luther progressed from Catholic monk to Protestant reformer. In this regard, English-speaking readers will appreciate particularly the discussions of those writings of the young Luther which have never appeared in translation.

In spite of the scholarly character of this work, however, there are certain places where its interpretations may be questioned. In dealing with Luther's first year in the monastery (p. 40), Boehmer pictures the young monk as already severely disturbed by a fear of divine wrath and thus already subject to much of the intensity of the spiritual "trials" (*Anfechtungen*) which he was to know in his later monastic years. There is, however, significant evidence to the contrary, indicating that Luther's year as a novice was relatively free from such soul-distress and that his severe attacks of terror before the divine judgment did not begin until he had, at least, become a full member of the Order.

One may also raise a question with regard to Boehmer's interpretation of the relationship of Luther's early attacks of fear to those of the post-monastic period of his life. It is here held that, whereas the former were brought about through a personal struggle for salvation in terms of the presuppositions of work-righteousness, the latter, in part physically conditioned, resulted from "worry over his work, grief over the frivolity and moral shortcomings of the evangelical princes and lords, . . . disillusionment over the ingratitude and sensuality of

the masses," and, above all, from the fear that his evangelical message actually might not be true and thus might, in fact, be a means to the condemnation rather than the salvation of those who hear and accept it (p. 93). The fact would seem to be that, though these latter trials were undoubtedly present, there was a greater line of continuity between the soul-distress of the monastic and post-monastic periods than Boehmer would recognize. The fears of Luther's later life, as much as of his younger, were rooted in the question of his own personal relationship to God, and arose out of the never wholly conquered temptation to cleave to the Law rather than to the Gospel, to trust in his own righteousness rather than in the divine mercy.

One may also question the adequacy of Boehmer's understanding of the nature of Luther's distress over the problem of predestination in his early monastic years. The suggestion is made that Luther's despair at this time resulted from the adoption of an Augustinian view of predestination, probably through a reading of *The City of God* (p. 97). However, one needs to note that there is evidence pointing to the fact that Luther did not become a thorough-going predestinarian in this period prior to his evangelical awakening, and also to recognize that his very real fear of being arbitrarily predestined to damnation can actually be explained as well in nominalist, as in Augustinian, terms.

Still, such minor defects cannot be said to detract in any real way from the significance of this work. Professor Boehmer's volume will long be recognized as an outstanding contribution to the literature of Protestantism. It is to be hoped that it will be widely read, and that many will find within it an opportunity for new or renewed appreciation of the religious meaning of the Reformation.

JOHN VON ROHR

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Melanchthon: Alien or Ally? By FRANZ HILDEBRANDT. Cambridge University Press, 1946. xxvii, 98 pp. \$2.50.

Dr. Hildebrandt's book gives one the impression that his Cambridge walks with the ghosts of Erasmus and Bucer have had something to do with its composition. Far from the madness of tyrants, our author found asylum in the university which once had offered Melanchthon a

professorship away from the rages of continental theologians. He believes the spirit of Melanchthon to be congenial with the Anglican.

There are some delightful pages (xv-xxvii) on the friendship of Luther and Melanchthon—those Siamese (though wholly unidentical) twins of the German Reform: Melanchthon, under the spell of Luther's person and doctrine; Luther, extremely fond of Melanchthon, and trusting his loyalty, but always keeping his critical sense even with respect to his mild and erudite friend. They complemented each other. Luther had substance, Melanchthon had power of clear and orderly expression. Luther's oracles were by Melanchthon translated into the *summa* of the *Loci Communes*, whose very title intimates an orientation quite foreign to Luther's. The polarities of Luther's thought are brought within the terms of dialectic and rhetoric.

Melanchthon's contribution of summarizing and harmonizing the doctrines of the Reformation "in proper language" is described as determining "the future of Lutheranism. The change of language is therefore of the most far-reaching psychological and theological importance" (xxvii). Whether Melanchthon's contribution makes him an alien or ally is the question. This is discussed in the form of five "concessions": Concessions to Tradition (Greece and Rome), to Reason (Natural Theology, Pure Doctrine), to Law (Pedagogical Aspect, Forensic Aspect), to Power (State Interests, Church Politics), to Opposition (Adiaphora, Diaphora).

The author has spread a banquet. In a review one can but sample the viands. So, for example, we are presented with Melanchthon's use of the Greek heritage (pp. 1-10). In his early Wittenberg days he spoke deprecatingly of Aristotle, in the manner of Luther. Then, step by step, he comes to the place where he considers Aristotle indispensable, even singling him out as the only reliable philosopher. The paradox is that Luther permits this. The solution, of course, is that Aristotle is used for natural science on the one hand; on the other hand he is used for theology, but only for arrangement and systematization. Now while Aristotle loved order and system, it is not in these that he saw his greatest contribution. He loved far more his work in metaphysics, the science of being. Likewise he took seriously the syllogism, especially as of the Posterior Analytics. In other words, he believed it possible to know something of the being of things, and to reach new truths by inference from necessarily true propositions. But of this more impor-

tant side of Aristotle, Melanchthon (a nominalist in epistemology) would have nothing. (It is, therefore, no wonder that Luther gave him a free hand.) Herein lay Melanchthon's opposition to the Scholastics, of whom—says A. E. Taylor—Thomas Aquinas interpreted Aristotle correctly. Melanchthon discards, for theology, the weightier part of Aristotle. He makes nothing of the logic and metaphysics, everything of the dialectics and rhetoric. Hence his use of the *Topica* in the very title of the *Loci*.

Dr. Hildebrandt queries if Melanchthon's Aristotle was really Aristotle. He rather lets us come to our own conclusions. Certainly there lay in the background some medieval Augustinianism (not Augustine himself, whose conversion began with a turning away from the skepticism of the New Academy). There was also the influence of Rudolph Agricola and Erasmus; and, too, the opinion—strongly voiced already by Bruni—that the Aristotle of the Scholastics was ungentle, that the true Aristotle *must* have been essentially a rhetorician. These factors should enter into a discussion of Melanchthon's use of the Greek heritage.

The author is careful not to say outright that the *Loci* is a theological work, though he intimates it is. To call it that raises problems. The use of the term "loci" is dubious. It is Cicero's *sedes argumentorum*. It can be translated as "points of view." It derives from the dialectical-rhetorical tradition. Altogether the *loci* do not make a *summa* (Melanchthon's subtitle). The *Loci Theologici*—like Calvin's *Institutes*—is rather a handbook for preachers. It is a homiletical work. As such it was eminently suitable to the rather notable era of pulpit oratory which the Reformation did much to inaugurate. That there are in Melanchthon elements from which speculation could develop is not surprising. Being native to man, how can speculation be kept out of any serious work? The intention, however, is to keep it out.

The most moving part of the book has to do with Melanchthon's concessions to power. I recommend it to the student of political theory, and especially to the student of the German Church under Hitler. Here the author maintains a preternatural calm, but, as one who has felt the tyrant's hot breath upon him, he must have expended much effort to remain objective. I am not sure that Luther should be so favorably treated, at Melanchthon's expense. The historical fact is stubborn that Luther's success owed considerably to princely favor. The

Peace of Augsburg (1555) was a logical outcome. Luther, indeed, saw more clearly the dangers in the situation. The author is quite right in intimating that—like Niemoeller—Luther would have been incarcerated. It is not so clear what might have happened to Melanchthon.

Dr. Hildebrandt has done a good service in reopening the perennial Philippist question. His book would be more useful if the text were free from so much Latin. There are so many who ought to read these pages, who will find the going too hard. It could be urged that Melanchthon's Latin is easy, but that does not help the many who have forgotten even Caesar. Why not throw the Latin into the footnotes where it belongs and let the text have the translations?

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The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience. By GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL. Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, Ltd., 1946. xii, 192 pp. 15s.

Puritanism is becoming increasingly a subject of interest, and the growing interest is often informed by a more pressing motivation than that which Professor Schneider said in 1930 makes us "occasionally visit the monuments and tombs of a buried antiquity." Perhaps the chaos of our thought and culture gives us a feeling of kinship with those caught in the confusion of tongues in seventeenth century England. Certainly the issues faced at that time and the way the Englishmen dealt with them are not irrelevant to us. Frequently our interest takes the form of looking into the faith which, to a large degree, begot us (e.g., Prof. R. B. Perry's recent book), with the forlorn hope of finding something which can keep us. The fact that Puritan England is the seedbed of so much in our world, that it is so many-sided and relatively unexplored, makes it a fertile ground for "Ph.D. chasers."

Mr. Nuttall is concerned with giving a fresh approach to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from a particular historical angle. In this study of religious experience in Puritanism, he enlightens one more facet of the complex "Puritan mind." His thesis is that the emphasis upon the immediacy of the spirit in early Quakerism "indicates the *direction* of Puritanism as a whole." One need not look (as Rufus Jones has done

so extensively) to the older continental mystics for Quaker roots. An adequate understanding of early Quakerism of necessity requires a knowledge of the Puritan emphases, most particularly the "radical Puritan" emphases. More than that, Puritanism itself, as a whole, is better understood when studied in terms of its "unique" emphasis upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, for there is a definite movement from the original Reformers and their rediscovery of the Word and the Spirit through the Puritans, and the "radical Puritans," to the Quakers, "the fag-end of the Reformation."

The subject is developed systematically, in ten concise chapters. Each aspect of the subject is studied in the more conservative Puritan writers, through the "mediators" or "radical Puritans" to the Quakers. The author discusses the relationship of the Spirit to Scripture in Puritans like Sibbes, where the "conjunction between Spirit and Word" is maintained. Emphasis upon Scripture as the criterion, weakening in the radicals (he cites Cromwell, Cradock, R. Brereley, and S. Petto), is reversed in the earlier Quakers, where primacy is placed upon the Spirit within. The whole knotty question of "reason" and the Spirit is traced through some of the less ambiguous Puritan writers to the Quaker contention that the Spirit is other than conscience or reason. By this procedure the author discusses such subjects as extemporaneous witnessing, praying and prophesying, and the concomitant neglect and belittling of ordinances, the consciousness of the "Age of the Spirit" and its relationship to prevalent millenarianism, and finally the immediacy of the Spirit's presence in individual men.

The book is suggestive and should be of interest to students of Puritanism. There are, however, a few questions which must be raised. One question regards the materials used to develop the thesis. Of course, the materials relating to this subject are myriad, and a writer has to stop somewhere. But it is difficult to see how Nuttall could have missed, or barely mentioned, some of the important, relevant materials: for instance, the Familist writings, those of William Walwyn, John Everard, Giles Randall, John Eaton, Gerrard Winstanley (only one isolated reference to him), Samuel How, and John Spencer. All of these are in the author's decisive group of "mediators." Some of these writers, notably Everard and Randall, were very influential men, had felt the power of the continental mystics, and thus would not fit so neatly into Nuttall's thesis. An acquaintance with Dr. Haller's work

(*Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution*, and *The Rise of Puritanism*) might have been useful here. In fact, generally speaking, Nuttall shows too little acquaintance with the more recent studies in Puritanism.

Puritanism did represent a new awareness of the outpouring of the Spirit. It was an "age of excitement." But there were other *directions* which Puritanism took besides that which came to a climax in the Quakers. One direction was toward an increasing emphasis upon conduct, upon "works." One direction was toward "rationalism." Max Weber found Puritan doctrine leading to laissez faire capitalism. Leveller democracy was also a child of Puritanism, as was the millenarian hope of a "Fifth Monarchy."

In the evaluation of his material for its importance today, Mr. Nuttall says that we no longer have any need for a doctrine of "original sin" (p. 174). This statement is interesting when taken together with his hope for a renewed current appreciation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. One does not have to be a Barthian to raise the question of how you can have a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in its proper relationship to the Trinity, without a doctrine of original sin. And the need for the concept and its validity are not destroyed by exploding the historicity of the Garden of Eden. The faith and work of the Quakers is a great part of our spiritual heritage, but George Fox's "enthusiastic assurance of triumph over sin through the Holy Spirit" is far removed from the experience of our generation.

Mr. Nuttall expresses the hope that his work may not only provide a new appreciation of Puritanism, including Quakerism, but may also prompt new thought on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The book should make a contribution to both.

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The Theology of John Wesley. By WILLIAM R. CANNON. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, Press, 1946. 284 pp. \$2.50.

Wesley and Sanctification. By HAROLD LINDSTRÖM. Stockholm: Nya Bokförlags Aktiebolaget, 1946. viii, 228 pp. 12 s.

These two scholarly books make notable contributions to the critical literature concerning the thought of John Wesley. Their appearance

constitutes an important event in contemporary theology as well, inasmuch as Methodist theology in its historic emphasis stands in marked contrast to that of the Reformers whose work is highlighted in current neo-orthodoxy. Wesley's theological power has received less attention than his practical achievements in the evangelical revival which he inspired. The two thoroughly systematic and able treatises by Cannon and Lindström point up the chief points of similarity and contrast between Wesley and the Reformers, and the resources in the Wesleyan tradition for a less pessimistic theological solution than that usually associated with neo-orthodoxy. The writers do not point their discussions toward the contemporary scene, but their works will have an influence far beyond that of mere historic interest in Wesley's essays and sermons.

Of these two works much that is highly eulogistic may be said. Both relate Wesley's thought to its historic background and the contemporary theological situation of his day. Both take careful account of the forces playing on Wesley's mind. Both take scholarly note of the vast Wesley literature already developed. Both amply document their presentations with numerous references to Wesley's works, the writings of the period, and the significant recent critical literature on Wesley both Catholic and Protestant. Perhaps Lindström's work shows the greater maturity in handling the vast critical literature. Cannon's fine study has the more pretentious title, but it deals primarily with the doctrine of justification by faith. Lindström's work would seem to deal with only a segment of Wesley's thought, but his treatise is really a thoroughly systematic discussion of Wesley's theology, including not only sanctification but also justification and other central problems. The doctrine of God is more completely treated by Cannon.

Whether the central emphasis of Wesley's thought is to be found in Justification or Sanctification constitutes the major problem precipitated again by these books. Both writers, of course, recognize that the two ideas belong together. Cannon's view is plainly that, in the body of theological teachings, "Wesley's doctrine of justification was the measure and determinant of all else" (p. 14). In his conclusion he states it was the "source" of the rest of his theology (p. 244). He goes on to say, however, "that the Wesleyan emphasis is on perfection, and holiness is the final label of the Christian" (p. 246). Lindström begins with sanctification as the end or final cause, and in relation to this

Christian goal places justification in its proper place. He insists that sanctification receives the major attention in Wesley's theology. He holds that the doctrine has generally been wrongly handled because scholars did not discover the internal links between it and the other idea, especially justification and final salvation. His exposition shows than an important "inner organic structure" is discoverable in the whole theology. He says:

The aim of this study is to provide such a systematic-theological analysis of the function and significance of sanctification in Wesley's conception of salvation. Thus we shall try to see sanctification in its full scope and in its due relation to the conception of salvation as a whole. We shall try to elucidate the connection between sanctification and justification, with regard to final as well as present salvation. Only when this has been done will it be possible to understand the significance and place of the idea of perfection in his conception of salvation. Further, an understanding of the character of sanctification will call especially for a detailed examination of the idea of love, since love was regarded by Wesley as the very essence of sanctification. A study of Christian love should also throw light on his attitude to Christianity as a whole (p. 16).

As between the two books the present reviewer must concede the argument to Lindström, not because of any defect in Cannon to recognize the place of sanctification, perfection, and love in Wesley's theology, but because of the unusual skill with which Lindström has shown the "internal links" in the whole doctrine. What ties the whole process of salvation together is the teleology of the perfection of man (p. 122).

A brief sketch of the main thesis on this last point may be illuminating. Lindström shows that the idea "of a gradual advance in sanctification is thus a typical feature of Wesley's view of salvation" (p. 120). The successive element is characteristic, applying to inherent sin and to inherent, real change. Thus there are degrees of good and of evil, of enmity to God, of self-denial, sincerity, peace, joy, and love. Both inward and outward holiness can be so expressed, as can also degrees of faith, of assurance of justifying faith, of contemplation of God, of God's vengeance and displeasure. "The idea of a gradual progression in sanctification extends beyond the boundaries of this life on earth. Wesley imagines a development toward ever greater perfection even after death" (p. 121).

The notion of degrees or gradual development, however, is not pre-

sented apart from other elements. It is, indeed, combined with an instantaneous element. The gradual process is interrupted by the direct intervention of God, who in an instant raises man to a higher plane. The ascent is by steps. These are the stages: "repentance, or conviction, justification (including the New Birth), sanctification (here in the sense of entire sanctification of Christian perfection), and glorification" (p. 122). Sanctification thus has its place between justification and final salvation. Through it the Christian life becomes a process of change. Whereas in justification there is a relative change in man, sanctification implies a real change. "It comprises the whole process of recovery, the object of which is to restore man to the image of God" (p. 122). But Wesley uses the term sanctification in a number of ways and sometimes to denote full sanctification alone. What Lindström especially analyzes is the role of the instantaneous and the gradual elements in the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian salvation.

Sanctification has its place between present justification or present salvation on the one hand and final justification or final salvation on the other. In the former relation justification is not a condition of sanctification. Present justification is accorded to man by a faith which does not involve any form of human holiness. In the latter relation, however, sanctification is a condition of justification, of final justification at the last judgment. It is only through sanctification that man becomes qualified for final salvation and glorification (p. 124).

The study by Cannon, though directed primarily at the doctrine of justification, does not in any way repudiate this general perspective. Indeed, one of the chief conclusions of his study specifically stresses this:

Finally, what God does for man in justification and conversion makes its mark on man's moral and spiritual life and expresses itself in a holy character and disposition, free from the hindrances of outward sin, progressively overcoming all inward desires that are evil, and being led on toward perfect love, which is the highest gift of sonship and the final goal to be reached on this earth before admission is granted into the Kingdom of God beyond the years. The Wesleyan ethics, therefore, is an ethics of realization and development; for a man is finally judged at the last day on the basis of what he is, not of what he might hope to become. Justification alone is partial and incomplete; it must be followed by entire sanctification of heart and life so that the forgiven sinner is transformed into the likeness of his Lord (p. 250).

Turning from this general perspective to certain special problems we can profitably compare the two treatments on such problems as the

influence of the Reformers on Wesley and his relation to specific men like Calvin, Luther, and William Law. According to Cannon, the motive of the religious life differs markedly in the Reformers and Wesley, and with this difference goes a distinct Christian ethic. In the Reformers the assignment of everything to the operation of God's grace causes them to interpret the merits of the moral life in terms of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ so that a believer is accounted righteous by faith. Wesley recognizes faith in Christ as essential to both the continuance and the beginning of the moral life, but he affirms that a man is not accounted righteous unless he is righteous, the holiness of Christ being of no avail apart from a genuine personal holiness which expresses itself in the Christian life (p. 224). Whereas Luther and Calvin maintain that in the ethics of salvation God is everything and man is nothing, Wesley maintains that there is a marked distinction between the initial justification by faith and his final salvation. The latter includes moral attainment and personal purity, not simply imputed righteousness. "Without inherent personal holiness, Wesley says, no man can see God" (p. 225). For the Reformers the Christian ethic is never one of realization as it is for Wesley. For Luther righteousness is a hope, an aspiration, never a fact.

This same point is emphasized by Lindström. He demonstrates that for Wesley perfection was an attainable and higher stage in the Christian life after forgiveness and new birth. On the other hand, for Luther "forgiveness, which at the same time meant the transformation of man, was in itself the highest expression of the Christian Life" (p. 136). Luther saw in the ethical change in man's will an incomplete beginning, one that could be perfected only in faith. To Wesley perfection was progress in inherent love and obedience beyond the faith of justification (p. 136).

These differences are related to the ideas of freedom, faith, assurance, the moral law, and works. Cannon devotes considerable attention to the affinity between Calvin and Wesley at one stage of the latter's thought. "In regard to the justifying act itself," Cannon writes, "Wesley is at one with Luther and Calvin" (p. 88). He stands shoulder to shoulder with them in the conviction that man is justified by faith and not by works (p. 89). He also agrees that God's grace is the source of justification. But the dividing line of thought comes with the concept of the operation of grace. Wesley rejected, first of all, the predestina-

tion of the Reformers, with its idea that the validity of a man's election does not in any way depend on his own consent (p. 91). Saving grace in the Wesleyan conception is not restricted; it is not particular; it does not rest on the prior principle of election or predestination (p. 93). Grace is free *for* all as well as free *in* all. Any other conception violates the character of God. Man can be without grace, but that is due to himself not God. "Though it is absolutely impossible for a man to win salvation or to perform acts which are genuinely good without grace, man does have the power to accept or to reject grace when it is offered to him" (p. 102).

Wesley himself, says Lindström in a treatment which accords fully here with that of Cannon, considered his view of justification in full harmony with the attitude of the Reformation. The views of Cell, Von Eicken, Scott, Schmidt, Leach, and Lang are noted in support of this interpretation (p. 87 n.). Man is justified by faith without the works of the law, nor is faith a work of man by which he may be justified. The notion that a man must be sanctified before he can be justified is rejected. Moreover, no works are good in the Christian sense that do not issue from justifying faith. "All truly good works are done after justification" (p. 89). And yet Wesley also affirms that repentance precedes faith and that the fruits of repentance ought also to precede faith (p. 94). These works he links with the idea of prevenient grace, but they are in no sense merits (p. 97). What is distinctive about Wesley is his synergism, which is a corollary of prevenient grace (p. 98, see also Cannon, pp. 113-15).

Faith, for Wesley, holds within it great powers. Indeed, faith has less to do with solace than with power. Saving faith necessarily produces good works and holiness. Salvation by faith must not occasion any depreciation of love and obedience, but the only faith of value is one that operates through love. The teleological tendency of Wesley's view of salvation is particularly evident, says Lindström, "when faith is seen as the means by which the law is established. Faith becomes the means of which love is the end . . . the real purpose of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ is thus declared to be the sanctification of man" (p. 101). In the relation of faith to love a causal view impinges upon the teleological. The explication of this relationship is a distinct contribution of Lindström (pp. 174 ff.). Faith is the source of love. Man's love must be born of God's love; the latter must always precede the

former. Love in man is thus a fruit of justifying faith; it is linked to faith in atonement and forgiveness and the accompanying sense of assurance. "The conviction of God's forgiving love is the immediate cause of man's love to God" (p. 175). Thus God's love is the cause and man's love to God and his neighbor is the natural consequence (p. 177).

This emphasis on the combination of the causal and the teleological view of faith and love throws light on Wesley's attitude toward the law and toward good works. "As love is the essence of the Christian life, the causal approach is combined with a teleological one" (p. 178), but "the causal view will always be subordinate ultimately to the teleological." In the last resort everything is directed towards its object: final justification and glorification. In this teleological process love to God and one's neighbor is regarded as fulfilment of the law of love. But while fulfilment of the law is still a Christian duty, it now derives from faith instead of being man's own work. "The Christian is immune 'from the curse of the moral law' but not released 'from observing it.' He is exempt from the 'condemning power' of the law if he truly believes in Christ but not independent of its 'directing power'" (p. 178). The Christian is bound by obedience to the moral law, which is now written in his heart. From the standpoint of the gospel the law of love is a great promise.

Another element enters here into Wesley's perfectionism of love, namely his affinity to certain types of mysticism. "Wesley," says Lindström, "sees perfection in terms of the mystic's idea of purity in intention and affection. Love is a wholehearted attitude to God, a means to attain the end of perfect and final union with Him" (p. 186). Whereas the natural man seeks happiness and satisfaction in the creation instead of the creator, the love of the Christian to God is identified with his longing to do His will alone. In love to God "the idea of man's desire for God is merged with that of surrender to Him and His will" (p. 187). This perspective distinguishes Wesley from William Law, a point stressed by both Cannon and Lindström. William Law, like Wesley, is a practical mystic, but he is more man-centered. For Law, salvation is primarily imitation of Christ, and love is an expression of progress upwards in the ascent from man to God (p. 165). He seems to incorporate Christian love into a system of legality and rationality resulting in the last analysis in the view that neighborly love is a matter of strict justice.

For Wesley, on the other hand, the whole relation of justification by faith plays a decisive causal role with the legal and rationalistic elements having, therefore, a radically different orientation. Wesley has a more profound awareness of sin from which man must be saved by the intervention of the grace of God.

There are many significant issues, relevant for current theological discussion, which must be left untouched in this review. One, however, is important for an understanding of Methodism, and it requires much more attention than that given it by either Cannon or Lindström. It belongs admittedly more to the sociology of religion than to traditional Christian theology and ethics. Cannon cites the great authority of Ernst Troeltsch on the distinction between two major types of Christian society, the church type and the sect type. The latter type

regards the religious community as that group of people who live according to the ideals of the gospel. It does not recognize the evils which exist in society at large as essential parts of man's life on this earth, and it either withdraws completely from society or else seeks to remake society after the pattern of the Christian ideal (p. 237).

Cannon agrees perfectly with Troeltsch in characterizing Wesleyanism as an example of the sect type.

Any attempt to interpret it otherwise or to attempt to construe it in terms of the recognized moral relativities of the church type as Troeltsch defines it is impossible. The demand for absolute holiness is not reconcilable with compromise freely admitted and accepted as such (p. 237).

There is much force in this argument, but it is also quite obvious that historical destiny has made of Methodism something other than a sect-type community in Troeltsch's meaning of the term. The reasons for its accommodation to the world and for its tendencies towards being a universal institution must not be sought entirely outside Wesleyanism.

One of these tendencies is found in that very ethic of Christian self-realization which has been commented on by both Cannon and Lindström. Left to its own teleological logic, self-realization moves beyond sect-type restrictions, beyond individualistic holiness and perfection, and into the whole realm of ends which constitute the good life. Another impulse pressing towards a universal and all embracing society as over against the small sect community is the inclusive conception of

grace. Grace that is free for all and in all, God's universal love for man, becomes the foundation of the unity of Christians. Lindström notes correctly (p. 193) that the Wesleyan fellowship after 1738 is ecumenical. His criteria of sanctification tend toward the sect-type, but his criteria of fellowship make for an inclusive Christian community:

And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship.

Lindström also notes that in a sermon entitled *Catholic Spirit*, preached in 1750, this ecumenical idea is presented in amplified form. Says Lindström: "The Christian fellowship is based on brotherly love between all Christians, a love that overrides distinctions of doctrine, ritual or ecclesiastical organization. It excludes all sectarianism and partisanship" (p. 194). He goes on to emphasize the belief that the ecumenical attitude of Wesley follows the line later called "Life and Work" as distinguished from "Faith and Order." "All Christians, Wesley maintains, may be one in faith and experience, although differing in opinion and expression" (p. 194).

Much more study is needed on these problems so briefly touched upon by Cannon and Lindström. It may be that the classical differences worked out so brilliantly by Troeltsch for the continental medieval and early Reformation periods may not fully fit a movement so rich and complex as that set in motion by John Wesley. His theology of justification, sanctification, and perfection in the love of God cannot be ignored in the social dynamics of that great denomination which emerged from the Evangelical Revival.

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Man as Sinner. By MARY FRANCES THELEN. New York: King's Crown Press, 1946. xii, 223 pp. \$2.75.

In her dissertation for the doctor's degree at Columbia University, Mary Frances Thelen, Assistant Professor of Religion at Hollins College, has demonstrated convincingly that the rediscovery of sin with a capital S has been the outstanding contribution of the new realistic

movement in American theology. Examining particularly the doctrine of man as sinner, she reaches the very core of realistic theology. What Reinhold Niebuhr, the central figure in her analysis, has restored to American theology is the concept of sin as rebellion against God, and not merely moral wrong. In his anthropology Niebuhr depicts man as a creature who is "fallen rather than rising," and has stressed the universality of sin to the point where sin infects every human act, the acts of the "righteous" not excepted.

Besides Niebuhr, there are other theologians who think the same way. Realistic theology is now represented by an important group of theologians, and Niebuhr has partisans both to the left and to the right. On his "left side" we find John C. Bennett, Walter M. Horton, and Robert L. Calhoun, all of whom—as Miss Thelen rightly sees—represent a liberal theology "with realistic accretions" (p. 148). For the moment Bennett seems to stand closest to Niebuhr, while the other two are still, in some respects, "unreconstructed liberals" (p. 191). To the "right" of Reinhold Niebuhr we find his brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, who follows an independent course of thought which, however, converges toward that of his brother in bringing thought into closer conformity with Christian experience.

Miss Thelen gives us an excellent account of the whole movement, and her statements of the different positions of the realists seem very fair. She has a keen capacity for discriminating between essential and non-essential problems, and she sums up her analyses in appropriate remarks and good characterizations. It may be said at once that she has subjected the whole movement to a careful and sober critical investigation that deserves wide attention. She certainly squeezes the juice out of her material.

Miss Thelen correctly regards realistic theology as "a revival of an older Augustinianism," and she states her own position thus: "although the truths in Augustinianism seem for the moment to be more urgent for salvation than the truths in Pelagianism, there are nevertheless truths in the position currently out of fashion" (p. 199). That statement is diplomatically formulated, but it is honest. It is characteristic of Miss Thelen that she endeavors to do justice to both realistic and liberal theology, but her criticism reveals the fact that, in the last analysis, she is entrapped in liberal moralism and finds it difficult to follow Niebuhr in his dialectical thinking. But she delineates very well the

gradual elaboration of his theology from his attack on group egoism in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* to his matured view in the famous Gifford Lectures. Niebuhr's role as a social prophet is excellently described, but to say that "*the major reason* (italics mine) for Niebuhr's interest in the doctrine of Original Sin has been that this doctrine has held the promise of creating the attitude which Niebuhr has been convinced is most desirable" (p. 113), is to accuse him of theological dishonesty. This, however, is not her intention, and she mitigates her judgment by admitting that he may, at the same time, be convinced that the doctrine is psychologically true. And, in fact, the latter must be the major reason, unless Niebuhr is degraded to a mere political thinker, which would be contrary to Miss Thelen's estimate of his impressive rethinking of theology for America.

Miss Thelen has two aims in her criticism: first, to discover whether realistic theology has been "correct in its interpretation of the contemporary movements upon which it draws," and, secondly, "to see whether it has not sacrificed as merely liberal certain insights which it needed to retain." This is a sound basis for criticism.

In order to be just to liberal theology, the author, in Part One, examines the treatment of the doctrines of man and sin in religious liberalism, as a background for the rise of realistic theology, and then, in Part Two, she takes the realists into consideration. In selecting a "normative" theologian to represent the liberal doctrine of man and sin, her choice falls upon the British theologian, Frederick R. Tennant. This will probably astonish most European readers. Why did she not choose an American liberal as might have been expected? Is this an expression of the general tendency in America to trace the historical lines too quickly to Europe, instead of keeping to the American background? Presumably few Europeans would remember the fact that W. A. Brown's *Christian Theology in Outline* (1906) has, for more than forty years, been the last attempt of American theology at a complete systematic exposition of Christian doctrine—so completely has liberalism dissolved theology in America! When Miss Thelen wants to illustrate the liberal American concept of man and sin, she turns to England, but would it really have been impossible to get the same material out of the writings of W. A. Brown, for instance?

After an examination of the concepts of human nature in liberal theology, philosophical idealism, "naturalistic theism," Marxism, and

psychoanalysis, the optimism of modern thought with regard to man becomes manifest, though Miss Thelen is eager to show the strands of pessimism in Marx and Freud: ". . . their pictures of human conduct as concealing unacceptable wishes behind façades of ideology and rationalization prepared the way for the subsequent revival of the doctrine of original sin" (p. 58). Does not this sentence give too much credit to their contributions to theology? Did not theology know of the corruptness of man long before Marx or Freud?

It is the important role which anxiety plays in Niebuhr's doctrine of sin which seems to seduce Miss Thelen into exaggerating the influence of psychoanalysis upon theology. She falls into this temptation in consequence of her expert knowledge of psychoanalysis. To say that "the influence of neo-Freudian thought is plain" in Niebuhr's theology (p. 185) sounds like an overstatement. Actually his theory of anxiety has its roots more in the study of Kierkegaard than in the study of psychology, and Miss Thelen is cognizant of this and even criticizes the realists for their "unsystematic" study of psychology. Indirectly she accuses Niebuhr of having only a superficial knowledge of depth psychology, because he fails to make a subtle distinction between a cosmic, anthropological anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Following Karen Horney, Miss Thelen distinguishes between *Urangst*, the Niebuhrian anxiety of man "in the paradoxical situation of freedom and finiteness" from which sin arises, i.e., anxiety in the face of reality as a whole—of life and its dangers—and neurotic anxiety, which arises primarily out of the hostility of other human beings. It is difficult to see that this distinction is necessary and empirical. Is it not merely a question of classification of different motives of anxiety. Why may not a maladjustment to reality as a whole be considered neurotic as well? Anthropological anxiety must be a psychological fact with psychological consequences if it is not a mere metaphysical speculation. However, the neo-Freudian distinction is a way of escaping the realistic assertion of some responsibility, some "sin" in the anxiety of the neurotic. And it is a way of escaping its treatment by the acknowledgment of guilt and the acceptance of forgiveness along with the psychotherapy.

In her examination of realistic theology to see whether it has not sacrificed more liberal theology than necessary, Miss Thelen's main objection against some of the realists is her surmise that their stress upon the transcendence of God is due merely to a lowering of the estimate of

man (p. 115). Sometimes she really seems to mean that the concept of God is the same in both realistic and liberal theology. The main difference would be anthropological, the liberal being optimistic and the realist pessimistic. The essence of liberal theology is certainly trust in man, while the essence of realistic theology is trust in God and distrust of man. The one is anthropocentric, the other, theocentric. But how can the liberals trust man? The answer is to be found in their one-sided concept of the imminent God. Realistic anthropology, on the other hand, is a sign of a realistic doctrine of God. The lowering of the virtue of man is "not quite the whole story," as Miss Thelen herself admits (p. 173). In limiting herself mainly to the doctrine of man as sinner, she does not keep the realist doctrine of God enough in view. But she cannot be accused of following too narrow a course in her investigation, since she takes into consideration not only the doctrines of man and sin but also those of personal and social salvation, the doctrines of God, Christology, the philosophy of history, social ethics, and eschatology. However, in the case of the doctrine of God, her investigation fails to be penetrating, and this is the weakness of the book, its only weakness, in my opinion.

In her discussion of this problem, Miss Thelen correctly emphasizes the fact that the realists lean heavily on the Hebrew prophets' conception of God's righteous judgment. In the Old Testament the realists found a doctrine of God's judgment relevant to modern society, to economic problems, and to the Second World War. There is nothing noteworthy, she seems to think, in the fact that, in spite of their revival of this old conception of God, the realists have not altered the conception of God as Love. How could that basic Christian conviction be changed? As Miss Thelen realizes, "there is a point of view from which God's justice and love are one." There is nothing wrong about defining God as Love; that is no "liberal" doctrine, but just plain Christian faith. No one maintains that everything in liberal theology is wrong; the main objection against liberalism is that it confused Christian faith with a non-Christian idealistic philosophy, and, as in Jesus' parable, the new cloth has rent the old garment. The definition of love in liberal theology was an oversimplification. When God's love is humanized by way of a doctrine of immanence, the way is open to convert "God is Love" into "Love is God," as in humanism, and God's transcendence is entirely lost, as Miss Thelen acknowledges (p. 166). The liberal con-

cept of God was too one-sided to do justice to the Christian faith—that was its failure. When the realists endeavor to restore the doctrine of God in its full Christian complexity, it is difficult to see why that should be branded as Barthianism (p. 79). Niebuhr's statement that "God's goodness is a mystery to us, as it was to Job," is only an expression of general Christian experience. The truth of the saying, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31), faded away in the liberal era, though medieval nominalism and the Reformation understood this aspect of the biblical concept of God.

In the end, what Miss Thelen objects to in realistic theology is its inability to relate undialectically the absolute to the relative. The duality of our relationship to God—due to His demand for perfection and our corruption—which Miss Thelen misses in realistic theology is really there all the time. The God of the realists is certainly not "unconcerned over the little more or little less of justice" (p. 205), as she has shown earlier in her discussion. Her doubts as to whether she ultimately proposes anything beyond realistic theology are well-grounded (p. 205). In her closing charge, however, she strikes at the basic problem not only of realistic but of all genuine theology, namely, the knotty problem of relating the absolute to the relative. No theology hitherto has solved this problem successfully—and least of all liberal theology, which solved it undialectically by reducing the absolute to the relative, by sacrificing transcendence to immanence, and perfect love to human possibilities. The dialectical relation between love and justice, perfection and possibility, is better than the liberal confusion in which divinity is confounded with humanity.

The substance of Miss Thelen's criticism, however, is that realistic theology is not definitely perspicuous in relating the absolute to the relative. She also correctly points to the conclusion that Niebuhr's concepts may give rise to in the minds of his readers: "Niebuhr's metaphysical position is rendered ambiguous by his unsystematic and unsatisfactory use of symbolism (his directions that Biblical symbols are to be taken seriously but not literally allow the reader too much leeway to be helpful)" (p. 110). *Honnêtement* she ascribes his failure to give a clear account of how he is to be interpreted to "limitations of knowledge rather than to lack of faith," but it might be that his ambiguity emanates from his fear of entangling himself in an untenable metaphysical position. He rightly senses the danger of mixing up theology

with metaphysics, or religious faith with the pretended knowledge of mere speculation. In asking for Niebuhr's metaphysical position, Miss Thelen reveals the common American tendency to mix up theology with metaphysics. Modern Swedish theologians, on the other hand, have devoted much effort to disentangling theology from metaphysics. As far as Niebuhr is concerned, it may be said that he has not solved the problem of the relation of theology and metaphysics, and that his ambiguous cautiousness springs from that hidden problem.

To a European contemporary, realistic theology represents the most promising movement in American theological thinking, not only because it can be understood in Europe, but also because of the capacity for original thinking of its representatives. Therefore it is to be hoped that Miss Thelen's weighty, first-rate, and up-to-date survey will receive proper consideration in Europe also.

GEORGE HAMMAR

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Religion: Its Functions in Human Life. A Study of Religion from the Point of View of Psychology. By KNIGHT DUNLAP. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1946. xi, 362 pp. \$3.50.

The author states clearly the aim of this volume.

It is the purpose of this book to present religion as a normal product of man's conscious processes: his desires, his fears, and especially his planning for future contingencies. . . . In order to understand the role a religion may or may not play in the civilization of the future, it is necessary to understand the roles that the religions of the past, from which religions of the present day have developed, have played in the cultures of which they were integral parts. Only through the study of these roles is it possible to discover what religion really is. This historical or genetic method is only one part of the full comparative method that is essential for a complete study of religion. The other part of the comparative method is the comparison of religions that exist contemporaneously, and which have little, if any, genetic relation to one another. . . .

Fortunately, the religions of civilized peoples can be understood by tracing them back to their foundations in religions of ancient cultures from which our civilization developed. This genetic method at least gives a primary understanding of the nature and functions of religion, which suffices for the purpose of this volume; the religions of civilized peoples having borrowed little from either the religions of present-day savages or those of semicivilized peoples, the full comparative method is not essential for our purposes. . . .

That the psychological problems of religion are primarily problems for group psychology and that the problems of personal religion are secondary in importance should be evident from the principle that is now generally accepted by scholars in the field of the history of religion. This principle, which is explained and illustrated in the text, is that faith develops from ritual, rather than ritual from faith. The development of faith from ritual, as an interpretation of ritual and with further progressive reinterpretations, is obviously consonant with the fact that ritual is a group product. Hence, although the principles of personal psychology cannot be ignored, the primary requisite for the study of the psychology of religion is the application of the methods of group psychology. . . .

In the treatment of Judaism and Christianity I have followed in the footsteps of scholars whose findings are irrefutable, especially in the steps of Salomon Reinach (pp. v-viii).

Any book which would carry out the purpose here sketched would be an important contribution to the science of religion and would throw light on those aspects of religious practices and faiths which most need illumination. Unfortunately, the book does little to fulfill its promise. A large part of its material is not truly genetic, but is gleaned from the unhistorical comparative method. Not only is it true, as the author himself states, that "in the treatment of Judaism and Christianity" he has "followed in the footsteps of scholars whose findings are irrefutable, especially in the steps of Salomon Reinach," but in his treatment of other religions, too, he has adopted "findings" which, whether "irrefutable" or not, have been repudiated by more recent and more historically-minded scholars.

After several chapters devoted to a non-functional discussion of the "concepts involved in religion" and of divinities, Professor Dunlap begins, in Chapter V, his psychology of religion with an analysis of the ways in which religion deals with the primary human desires, to wit, "alimentary, protectional, rest, activity, excretory, erotic, philopedic preeminence, conformity desires." These nine types reduce to three "alimentary and protective desires and the means of their satisfaction . . . with erotic desires running well behind, in third place at the best" (p. 132). The author then provides us with a long catalogue of sacred food animals, vegetables, and fruits, of fearful objects from which protection is sought, and of erotic objects from which religion has provided symbols. Though this catalogue contains much information (and considerable misinformation) it is so scattered that the reader gets very little help in understanding how any particular reli-

gious organization and tradition satisfied (or failed to satisfy) the basic desires. Similarly, Chapters XI and XII, which discuss religious organization, fail to relate organized religions to personal desires except by repeating the author's presupposition that

Organization is the psyche of religion, its life principle. Without organization, social religion is impossible; and without social religion, personal religion, which is but the shadow of social religion, would perish. The church is not, and through the ages has not been, religious organization applied to religion or abstracted from religion. The church is religion, organized and vitalized (p. 268).

In short, where there is much functional information about the religious treatment of desires, the author's method ignores organized religion; and when there is a theoretical discussion of organized religion, the author's theories preclude a detailed analysis of the psychological functions of religion. In both cases a genuinely genetic use of comparative materials is lacking.

There are many supposed statements of fact which it would be difficult to substantiate. I cite a few:

In earlier pagan religions, the rest motive was lacking. There is no indication that in pre-Christian religions anyone sought rest (p. 197).

The purpose of the Founder of Christianity was not to save mankind from sin, but to destroy sin itself, or, we may say more accurately, to eliminate the concept of sin from the human mind (p. 234).

We know of no benefits that fear confers on man, and the despising of cowardice is probably justifiable (p. 248).

The more sincere the repentance, the greater the probability of a repetition of the offense (p. 249).

The chief difficulty, however, which a critical student of this book meets is the confusion created by two quite different (if not incompatible) theses regarding the most general cultural functions of religion. One is stated on page 23:

Religion inherently is resistant to changes, both in itself and in all matters of personal and social life with which it is closely associated. This is merely a summary generalization of the fact that religion, everywhere, and in all times, is ultraconservative; that it values the antique; that in any stage of its development it considers itself to have reached the ultimate phase; that it lags behind the progress of culture and operates to prevent cultural advance.

The other is stated on page 321:

Religion is the institution, or feature of culture, which undertakes, in the service of mankind, those functions for which there is no other institution or for the undertaking of which no other institution is as yet adequately prepared.

The contrast between these two theses is evident at once, and the consequences of taking now one now the other point of view pervade the whole volume.

The more original and fruitful of these theories about religion's primary function is certainly the latter, the thesis that religion attempts the impossible, and it is a pity that the author gives so petty a development to so brilliant an hypothesis. That there is something radically adventurous in religion, something not conservative but prospective, a groping into the dark regions of human existence, a reaching beyond the known and the practical, this theory that religion changes its functions as other institutions advance and that it moves always toward the frontier if not toward the boundless, this theory is worth pursuing, especially as a theme for social psychology. Professor Dunlap has performed a great service for critical students of religion in thus pointing out a new path for them to proceed upon, a path which he himself has not explored.

HERBERT W. SCHNEIDER

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The Interseminary Series. In Five Volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946-1947. First four volumes, \$1.50 each. Fifth volume, \$1.00.

The Challenge of Our Culture. Vol. I, edited by CLARENCE T. CRAIG.

The Church and Organized Movements. Vol. II, edited by R. C. MILLER.

The Gospel, the Church, and the World. Vol. III, edited by K. S. LATOURETTE.

Toward World-Wide Christianity. Vol. IV, edited by O. F. NOLDE.

What Must the Church Do? Vol. V, edited by ROBERT S. BILHEIMER.

These attractively printed and bound volumes constitute an "inter-seminary series" of five volumes. Their purpose, in the words of Rob-

ert Bilheimer, the general editor, is (1) "to outline the character of the contemporary world which challenges the Church," (2) "to proclaim afresh the nature of the gospel and the Church which must meet that challenge," and (3) "to set forth the claims which ecumenical Christianity makes upon the various churches as they face their world task."

Since Dr. Mackay (a professor of ecumenicity) speaks for ecumenicity and is, seemingly, the theological spokesman for the group as a whole, we may note what he has to say (in the fourth volume): It is not the achievement of a world community (allegedly a "secular" concept!); it is not the reunion of unreconciled churches; it is not polity elevated to faith; and it is not submission to some supreme hierarchy. Rather, it is a concrete corporate allegiance to Jesus Christ, the acceptance of Jesus as God and Savior, plus (according to Mackay) belief in a crucified Redeemer, risen and head of the Church, plus the mind of Christ, etc.,—an allegiance which can be expressed only in corporate terms. It means a Christian theology, the source of which is the whole Bible, a basic revealed Word of God, the Church as the New Israel and the Body of Christ. The Protestant Reformation theology is to be the base in unity ("taken seriously").

Naturally, for those Christians who do not move in this type of *theological* orbit, it is reasonable to ask: Is this ecumenicity? Ecumenicity, in other words, is theologically to be on terms of a conservative theology—with a disguised Calvinistic basis—according to Mackay! So far as can be determined, practically all the writers move in this theological orbit—with phrases so much alike as to suggest some hidden *imprimatur* back of the series.

Is this ecumenicity? How are other Christians to share in such a program? Unitarians are out, of course. Genuine liberals are out—unless their liberalism is of the kind tolerated by the type of ecumenicity. Yes, we have some variety (as Professor Bennett says in one essay: such a variety as Temple, Niebuhr, Brunner, Berdyaev (!)) and hopefully, he adds, not to omit the quiet Quakers! (How typical Quakers get in and not Universalists, for example, is, perhaps, a matter of expediency in grace.)

Evidently we have here, in these books, a document of partisans who speak of ecumenicity on their own general terms. Unashamedly, they would ignore those equally sincere Christians who follow the great ideals and spirit of Jesus, but who do not limit their pattern of thought

to the present revival of traditional Protestant theology. I doubt that Christ himself would have circumscribed such a small circle with the term "ecumenicity."

Some of the essays, however, reveal a certain current of independence from the general norm of the series. For example, the essay by Elmore McKee is one that reveals a depth of personal experience and such independence. He rightly warns that those who talk officiously of ecumenicity from "the treetops" must remember that their words are cold and void unless those of the "grass roots" are considered—the rank-and-file-Christians. And he speaks of *practical* ecumenicity in terms of particular parishes where fine phrases are put to the test. McKee tells of his determination to practice it (in New York City and elsewhere). He is convincing, but I doubt much that his ecumenicity is after the pattern of the Princeton definitions.

Another independent essay is that by Dr. Spinka, who writes as an historian. In a masterful way he draws in broad lines a sketch of the origin of the larger denominations. The reader is taken right up to modern times with a particularly illuminating section on the less well known churches of the Near East and Russia. H. Paul Douglass makes a telling point when he warns that the Church must not be thought of either as a vaporous abstract something or as an institution, but rather after the fashion of a middle way: it is the *koinonia*, a concept of a more basic social phenomenon and organization. And then he adds examples of how unity is going on in America quietly and unobtrusively—without all the fanfare of ecumenical conventions. Douglass is keener in his analysis than many of the contributors who want action now in terms of resolutions, migrations, and committees. He sees how ecumenicity—real ecumenicity—is a slow and noiseless process which moves on the level of culture, rather than upon some dogmatic theological platform of self conscious ecclesiastical statesmen.

Buell Gallagher (first volume) has an illuminating essay on racism and color caste which reveals the sins of Christian saints both ancient and modern. The organized movements (discussed in the second volume) which are supposedly competing with the church are the cults, service clubs, welfare work, scientism, Marxism, nationalisms, philanthropic organizations, and the like. In short, whereas the ethics is admitted to be good, the right theology is lacking! The general editor's

final volume is a summary, but it is wrapped up in the nice package of an inherited Reformation theology.

One volume (the first) speaks of the culture of our age. I do not see how the contrasts set up are so much against the Christian Church as depicted by some of the writers. One of them deplores the scramble for security and wealth and the curse of money. But all the writers, so far as I am aware, are comfortable professors with comfortable salaries and privileges outshining even the average unknown parish minister. I am, therefore, unregenerately unimpressed by such shedding of tears about our present culture. The grab for power in the world—another besetting sin of our culture—goes right on even among those who wail. Certainly one is not convinced by such wailing when there are those who, standing in privileged places in the Church, crack their whip of judgment upon others whose Christianity is of another flavor, the sting of which is supposedly made potent by the power of some ecclesiastical prestige. Some of us are willing to accept such lashing as: the “true Christian . . . should repudiate with all his heart any trend toward a watery undenominationalism,” because we feel strongly that real ecumenicity is deeper than denominational heritages and theologies and are not afraid of such hierarchical judgments of those posing as theological dictators of ecumenicity.

With some few exceptions, these volumes are, in short, not as ecumenical as they claim to be—there are too many omissions of Christian viewpoints. Why are many contemporary Christian leaders of thought and even of practice—some of them in theological seminaries training Christian ministers—omitted in this plea for ecumenicity—unless it is that they do not count in such a program? Prophets never do. They must wait their time.

All of this, of course, is not to say that there are not a great many fine insights in these volumes; and certainly there are competent contributors. It is, rather, the arrogant manner of exclusion which constitutes the weakness of this platformized type of ecumenicity that constitutes the basis for the protest of this reviewer, and of others whose voices may not be raised but who share the same feeling.

VERGILIUS FERM

The College of Wooster

BOOK NOTES

The Nature and Purpose of the Gospels. By R. V. G. TASKER. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944. x, 134 pp. \$1.50.

This small volume is a summary of current British scholarship concerning the Gospels, dedicated to and apparently written for teachers of "Scriptures" in secondary schools. It is, however, not to be dismissed as a hack job. Though the author reflects the views of such writers as Burkett, Gardiner Smith, Sir Edwyn Hoskins, C. H. Dodd, and others, it can be seen that he has made his own choice of authorities and has exercised his own judgment as to their views. While not presenting any essentially new positions, the book is useful, not only, no doubt, to the secondary teachers referred to, but also as a road sign indicating the direction in which contemporary scholarship is traveling.

The discussion deals chiefly with the familiar problems of the literary relationships of the four Gospels, the problems of the apocalyptic materials, and the problem of Jesus' ethical teachings. Form criticism, with its emphasis on the oral period of transmission, constitutes the point of departure for the first of these. The problem of literary sources is, quite properly in a book of this sort, given cursory treatment, but one notes in passing the view that "Q" was only one of many such early collections of Jesus' sayings, and the author's rejection of the Streeter-Vincent Taylor theory of Proto-Luke, the latter on the ground that the special Lucan material appears to come from a later rather than an earlier period in church history. The emphasis falls on the purpose and characteristics of the Gospels. None of them are histories, in the proper sense of the word, but presentations of the Christian gospel. The Fourth Gospel was an answer to agnostic tendencies which had crept into the church and a presentation of the theological meaning of Jesus to Hellenistic minds. It is not to be regarded as the work of an individual mystic—nor of one of the Twelve—but one backed by the authority of an important early church.

The apocalyptic problem is easily disposed of by the adoption of C. H. Dodd's thesis of "realized eschatology." In the events of Jesus' life "the sovereignty of God is *finally* and unmistakably asserted and *realized* and his reign manifested [*Italics mine*]. They constitute in fact the 'day of the Lord.' In Jesus, God was displaying the activity that He was expected to display in the last day" (p. 88). This is supplemented by the view that the teachings of Jesus on this subject have "been overlaid in the gospels by a good deal of conventional apocalyptic teaching, unoriginal in character, which was taken from early Christian apocalypses composed in order to explain the delay of the Lord's return" (p. 86).

The sections which deal with the ethical teachings of Jesus, deal with the problem of their applicability to our kind of world. The interpretation presented is that these sayings constitute an absolute ethic: "That teaching must remain for us who live in a very imperfect, disordered world, a world in which only relative goodness is obtainable, a stimulating ideal, in the light of

which we can never dare to claim that anything we do is perfectly good" (p. 97). Faith, obedience, and humility are the cardinal Christian virtues.

It was suggested above that this volume should be reviewed as a reflection of the general position of British scholarship so far as studies in the Gospels are concerned. If this is the case, two differences will be seen if one compares the above contents with American writings. In the first place, scholars in this country are not nearly so sure that Professor Dodd's interpretation of the apocalyptic sayings can be accepted, certainly not without modification. We need badly further discussion of this matter. Many popular writers seem to regard Dodd's view as generally accepted. In the second place, one feels that the interpretation on this side of the water of the ethics of the Gospels retains still a larger element of that activism which continental theologians have decried, and which in its more extreme forms has been regretted. Faith, humility, and obedience—these are indeed the Christian virtues, but obedience, if it has vitality, must include a criticism of social standards which contradict the Christian spirit and a positive desire to remake them along other lines. Professor Tasker by no means denies this, but one gets the impression from his discussion that the social obligations of the Christian ethic are secondary and derived rather than implied. No doubt some individuals would explain these differences in terms of the well publicized cultural lag, but I am not so sure that these positions should be given up without at least much further light on each topic.

HARVIE BRANSCOMB

Doctor Johnson's Prayers. Edited with an Introduction by ELTON TRUEBLOOD. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947. xxxv, 66 pp. \$1.50.

Popular anecdotes about Dr. Johnson almost invariably reveal him as a man of common sense, often dogmatic, sometimes unfair to his opponents, but always a formidable gladiator in the arena of controversy. Although Boswell took pains to show the many other sides of his character, readers too often come away from the biography with the predominating impression of Johnson as a great bear. This one-sided view can best be corrected by a familiarity with Johnson's own works. Especially important for an understanding of his deeply religious nature are the prayers he composed for his private devotions.

In the past, editors have printed the prayers along with the meditations and autobiographical comments that appear in the manuscript which Johnson gave the Reverend George Strahan shortly before he died. Mr. Elton Trueblood, omitting the other material, has reproduced the prayers by themselves and has arranged them, not in the usual chronological order, but according to the nature of the intercessions. There is a distinct advantage to having the prayers in this form. Readers who place a high spiritual value on the prayers—and their number is considerable—now have them available in an attractive little volume that includes an appreciative Introduction by the editor. Furthermore, as Mr. Trueblood remarks, the present arrangement probably approxi-

mates the plan that Johnson would have used had he lived to edit his own text.

The present edition is particularly designed to show that the prayers "are genuine classics of devotion." In writing them Johnson customarily followed the form of the Collect as he knew it in the Book of Common Prayer, and "the Collect form," Mr. Trueblood observes, "is a reasonably strict one, proceeding from Salutation to Ascription, to Petition, to Reason for Petition, to Conclusion." Certainly Johnson's style is here often displayed to its best advantage. The language of the prayers is dignified and rhythmical, the diction is free from turgidity, and the strong personal note constantly reflects the reverence and humility that formed such an important part of Johnson's character.

MAURICE J. QUINLAN

Nature and Values. By EDGAR SHEFFIELD BRIGHTMAN. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945. 171 pp. \$1.50.

On the Nature of Value: The Philosophy of Samuel Alexander. By MILTON R. KONVITZ. New York: King's Crown Press, 1946. viii, 119 pp. \$2.00.

Here are two additions to the constantly growing flood of books on Value Theory. Professor Brightman writes in his Preface that he is "convinced that the spiritual conflict underlying the social turmoils of our age can best be understood in the light of a philosophy of personalism. . . . The age is marked by a heightening tension between personalism, idealism, and theism on the one hand and impersonalism, dialectical materialism, and naturalism on the other."

The heroic role attributed by Dr. Brightman to "personalism" is matched by casting "naturalism" as the villain of the piece, in a baffling interpretation which runs through a good part of the book. "In order to sharpen the problem for the necessarily restricted purposes of this brief discussion," Dr. Brightman usually treats "idealism in its contemporary aspect as personalism, while, instead of referring to materialism," he usually speaks of "modern naturalism" (p. 91). This strange use of terms is further complicated when we are told that "some personalists reject idealistic metaphysics" (p. 114), that "A consistent positivist is a kind of idealist" (p. 107), and that personalism is "more empirical than naturalism" (p. 115). Confusion can hardly be worse confounded. "If the reader is still perplexed about what this naturalism is," writes Professor Brightman at the end of his chapter on Naturalism, "let him not blame me. Let him blame the naturalists." This would seem rather less than justice.

Dr. Konvitz's work, besides being a contribution to the literature of valuation, is a study of one aspect of the philosophy of Samuel Alexander and is helpful as an introduction to this important thinker. To some extent, indeed, the twofold purpose of Dr. Konvitz's essay seems to have been a hindrance, for his exposition of Alexander, though evidently the product of intimate and absorbed familiarity with this significant figure in recent philosophy, is com-

plicated by his own views, which themselves deserve independent presentation. If the proportions had been reversed, and Alexander's thought had been used not as a foil but as a springboard, a very different book would have resulted. This is, of course, not a criticism of Dr. Konvitz's intention in the present instance; a thorough study of Alexander's philosophy for its own sake would surely be well worth while. Mr. Konvitz's own unpublished doctoral dissertation may be such a work, and a forthcoming study by Dr. John McCarthy will be another. Surely Alexander deserves extensive, critical examination from a variety of viewpoints.

One section of Dr. Konvitz's study has a heading almost identical with the title of Dr. Brightman's book, and the reviewer found more substance in this single section than in the whole of Professor Brightman's volume. Quoting freely from Alexander, Dr. Konvitz writes (pp. 10-11):

Naturalism does not imply the artificiality of value. Right and wrong are man-made, but they are not, for that reason, simply conventional or artificial. "Right represents human nature at its best," and what is best, as what is true, is the discovery not of unaided intuition or reason, but of experiment; "it is an expedient struck out in the effort to maximise satisfactions.

In a passage which contrasts with Plato's remark in the *Euthyphro* that the holy is loved because it is holy, and it is not holy because it is loved, Alexander says that the preciousness of values consists in their being values. "On the contrary, the human values by being thus related to other values do not lose their preciousness, but in fact preserve it by forfeiting their mystery. Human nature does not lose by becoming intelligible but comes into its own.

The first quotation from Alexander is from an essay, "Lessons from Spinoza," in the *Chronicon Spinozanum* for 1927 (pp. 23-24), and the second from *Space, Time and Deity* (II, 314).

JAMES GUTMANN

Our Part in This World. Interpretation by FELIX ADLER. Edited by HORACE L. FRIESS. New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia University, 1946. vii, 93 pp. \$2.00.

The published works of Felix Adler, and especially his *Ethical Philosophy of Life*, which established his place in the forefront of American social and moral-religious thinkers, represent only a part of his writings. Much of his thought is still in manuscript. This little volume of selections, by Adler's literary executor, is published in commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of Adler's establishment of the Ethical Culture Society. It is such fine evidence of Adler's manuscript treasure that we hope the editor, Professor Friess, will soon give us another and more extensive volume of Adler's essays, as well as his own intellectual biography of the author, on which he has been engaged for some time.

In this book of one hundred pages, the editor has wisely limited his field, emphasizing the social-political and religious issues in our time. These essays

rouse the reader's aspiration to realize his spiritual capacities to the utmost, to strive toward perfecting his life with others. Unique self-expression in and through just, generous, truly humane co-operation with others; this is Adler's moral-social ideal.

This noble aim is more than a sublime gesture. Adler's eyes are on the ideal summit, but his hand is ever on the plow, and the furrows of his thought, on which we may follow him in this book, are many and important. The three essays on "Hopes and Issues of the Twentieth Century" consider the bearing of scientific advance on the true progress of mankind—a problem which our atomic age has made even more crucial. They probe deeply into the issues of social reform and the labor movement. Beyond the conflict for economic mastery in which greed is arrayed against greed, beyond the struggle for shorter hours and higher wages, beyond the demand for safer and more wholesome conditions of work, Adler pleads for "a social order with a loftier type of morality than the world has yet known" (p. 21). He would fire the social struggle with a truly human enthusiasm, and transform the labor movement from a mere class struggle into a moral reform of our civilization.

So, likewise, in the political field, national and international, Adler recognizes the deep ethical values of national life, but he pleads for international social-mindedness, for a society of nations in which the peculiar worth of each people will be interwoven with that of others, in justice and peaceful co-operation, to enrich the living texture of humanity.

The two chapters on "The State of Religion" and on "The Ethical Culture Movement" represent Adler's critical and constructive ideas as a religious thinker. They should interest even those who may not be able to follow him. He defines religion as "the effort to give expression to that urge toward completeness, which is the deepest thing in man" (p. 48). Hebraism sought a way to God by the fulfillment of God's laws. Christianity hoped for perfection and blessedness through salvation by Christ, with whom we can be united in faith. Adler finds need of "a new conception of our spiritual nature" that should "direct religious effort, not so much to the defense of God's citadel, as to expanding vision of spiritual truth in the active process of transforming human society more ethically" (p. 54).

There is searching analysis in this little book; there is reasonable argument; there is homiletic eloquence. But there is also real spiritual ardor, when thought bursts into flame. This review may close with a part of the last paragraph in the book:

If you go deep enough into our earth you come on fire. . . . That is a testimony that we are of the same make as that sun out of which at the first we were born. So man too is not all crust, is not all earth, but if you penetrate into his nature deep enough, you will come upon the eternal fire that burns there; that makes itself felt in the quaking and the volcanic eruptions of his conscience and spirit. That is a testimony that we are of the same make as that sun, the infinite, out of which we were born, and whose undying flames still burn at the heart of our being.

RADOSLAV A. TSANOFF

Civilization, Science and Religion. By A. D. RITCHIE. New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1946. 188 pp. 25 cents.

This is a brief, though able, discussion of the development of European civilization. The author moves freely through a wide range of materials in his attempt to show relationships where disparity has frequently been thought to be the case.

Civilization here is defined as tradition, "everything that differentiates the bulk of the inhabitants of Europe, North America and certain other parts of the world from primitive peoples." This tradition is thought of as "fundamentally spiritual," and is considered to be "predominantly scientific," although not in any naturalistic sense. The essence of religion is defined as the "sense of absolute obligation."

Exception may well be taken to many of the author's sweeping generalizations. It is questionable whether the "four main civilizations" of our time (Chinese, Indian, Arabian, European) "have developed independently with only occasional interrelations." It is also questionable whether civilizations "stagnate" and "decay." Magic may be to the author "sham science" or "sham religion," but it would likely be more to the point to discover what it is to the peoples by whom it is most widely used.

Ritchie has provided us with a stimulating treatment of the development of European thought, done in a critical, though not always cautious, temper. Being non-technical and undocumented, it is intended for the general reader rather than the student.

W. L. LANCEY

Wisdom and Responsibility: An Essay on the Motivation of Thought and Action. By WALTER FALES. Princeton University Press, 1946. viii, 166 pp. \$2.50.

This little book, by a European scholar who came to Yale as Visiting Fellow and is now teaching at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, is a thoughtful attempt to interpret human life in terms of a certain primacy ascribed to inherent "final ends," analogous to instincts in the lower animals. In his introductory "General Outline," the author mentions the unwitting mosquito that lays its eggs properly in a pool for the survival of its progeny, and adds, "There is much evidence that man is likewise determined by final ends which are not an object of his contemplation although they account for his personality and constitute his will. The pressure which the final ends exert upon man is felt as responsibility" (pp. 4-5) and as a certain "blind wisdom" in behavior (p. 55). Man's relation to them "is his destiny" (p. 5). "They represent the ultimate as it becomes effective in individuals" (p. 7).

This is the fundamental postulate on the basis of which the successive chapters develop a profusion of generalizations concerning major elements of our existence—values, knowledge, society, education. The conclusion, which was implied in the premises, is that the organization of man's outer world is a

creative projection of his "inner organization" (p. 161) of values and ideas, which, in turn, derives its structure from his final ends. The primordial importance of the latter reverses or subordinates the role often attributed to intellectual and other features of the surface of life (p. 162).

Substantial treatment of the great issues referred to by the book's title is limited to the position that the locus or origin of "wisdom" and "responsibility" is in the final ends. As for these all-important final ends themselves, the fact that throughout the book they remain unspecified and mysterious—"They are the basic miracle to which all other miracles can be reduced" (p. 53)—is justifiable if Mr. Fales is justified in maintaining that, in the nature of the case, they are unknown (pp. 55-56), and that, although they are not absolutely unknowable (p. 60), "they lose the property of being final as we approach them in our thinking" (*ibid.*). He does suggest, at one point, that they are probably "more sublime than mere survival" (p. 34; cf. pp. 94 f.). In any case, the merit of the book resides primarily in the fact that the many-sided application of its interesting hypothesis occasions a variety of insights and observations which seem as much to reflect as to illuminate the nature of wisdom and responsibility.

JAMES BISHOP

Albert Schweitzer, Christian Revolutionary. By GEORGE SEAVER. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946. 130 pp. \$2.00.

Seaver's book gives a short but comprehensive outline of Schweitzer's ethical ideas. It is written with sympathetic understanding and deep admiration for the German theologian, physician, and musician who, a modern saint, withdrew from Western civilization and exchanged home for homelessness, not like a Buddhist hermit to live for his own salvation, but in order to devote his life and work to the medical care of the African natives. And yet, there is a strong strain of the Buddhist attitude in this man, though obviously somewhat deflected by Schopenhauer's metaphysics. Just as in Schopenhauer, the will-to-live plays an important and somewhat unclear role in Schweitzer's philosophy which—again with Schopenhauer—places pity at the supreme summit of ethical perfection. However, just as in Schopenhauer, the "reverence for life" and the sympathy with all creatures lacks that dogmatic-religious background which it has in Buddhism and Brahmanism through the belief in karma and re-incarnation. One may perhaps question Seaver's characterization of Schweitzer's position as "ethical mysticism"; there is too much of the agnostic in Schweitzer to justify this classification. Seaver seems to have borrowed the expression from Oscar Kraus's *Albert Schweitzer: His Work and His Philosophy*, as did John D. Regester in his study about Schweitzer. However, Kraus had used the term in a disparaging sense, which neither Seaver nor Regester intend to imply.

WALTER ECKSTEIN

The Christian Heritage in America. By GEORGE HEDLEY. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946. x, 177 pp. \$2.00.

One of the more fortunate results of the war has been to make the various nations conscious of "the hard-bought things"—the spiritual values residual in the culture for which a price was paid in suffering and death. In her time of trial, Mother Russia fell back upon the Orthodoxy which had nourished her for a thousand years, and religious faith flowered forth in a way which astonished western observers who had been impressed by the League of the Militant Godless. In a recent brilliant writing, John Baillie develops the theme that "at least in Britain and America" there are cultural reserves which may properly be called "Christian." "The historical permeation of our society by Christian ideas and ideals is a development for which we must be profoundly thankful to the Lord of all history, and for the furthering of which it is our duty to pray fervently, to work diligently, and to hope as bravely as we can" (*What is Christian Civilization?* p. 59).

Among the integrating and strengthening forces in our culture, the communities sustaining the Hebrew-Christian tradition have a tremendous value. During the recent war, our own constitutionally neutral government developed in the armed forces a ministry of pluralistic pattern, with rather striking success. We have been so prone to exaggerate the multiplicity of sects in America that we forget the enormous unitive strength of the great communities; yet "83% of the American membership in religious bodies is concentrated in twelve large units having more than a million members each, and 95% in thirty-six Churches each with over one hundred thousand members" (p. 142). In these Chapel talks, the Associate Professor of Economics and Sociology at Mills College portrays the several religious traditions which make up our spiritual heritage.

The Christian Heritage in America is written in a style which will make the book popular with undergraduates, and, at the same time, there is a wealth of information and sound interpretation which should make it appeal to professionals. At a number of points he exposes the "casualness, sloppiness, non-recognition of ultimate values" in popular religion; he shows how "all Christians are Jewish" (p. 3); he stresses the importance of theology: "Theological clarity is the necessary foundation for any reputable sort of thinking about life" (p. 13). He describes the vigorous ethical discipline of Baptist and Quaker congregations, and the impact they had upon society at large (pp. 84, 94). "We shall profit by adding, and with positive conviction, some recognition of the claims of Christian faith upon the personal behavior of the faithful" (p. 147). He shows the connection between critical scholarship and social concern (p. 133). Of special worth is Dr. Hedley's discussion of the failure of the big Churches to minister adequately to the underprivileged (pp. 145 ff.). He describes the way in which the rural-to-urban migrant has been frozen out of our well-equipped physical structures; the revivalist groups and small sects have inherited a ministry to "the people of the dirt" from the indifferent leadership of the churches of the nice people.

Each major denominational contribution—including the Jews, the Orthodox, the Catholics—has been given a chapter of positive treatment. The book should be widely used by students, for free reading and as a resource.

FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

Essays on Antisemitism. Edited by KOPPEL S. PINSON. With a Foreword by SALO W. BARON. (Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged.) New York: Conference on Jewish Relations, 1946. xii, 269 pp. \$2.50.

This is a greatly expanded and improved edition of a valuable work on antisemitism (reviewed in this journal, January, 1943). There are several new studies: The editor, who, in addition to being Associate Professor of History at Queens College in New York, has spent many months in educational work with displaced persons in Europe, writes in a somewhat pessimistic, though balanced, tone of "Antisemitism in the Post-War World"; Dr. Hannah Arendt, of the editorial staff of Schocken Books, formerly on the research staff of the Commission for European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction and on the faculty of Brooklyn College, and for many years before that engaged in social work in France, writes of antisemitism in France "From the Dreyfus Affair to France Today"; and Professor Waldemar Gurian of Notre Dame University, editor of the *Review of Politics* and author of many works in political theory, presents a detailed account of "Antisemitism in Modern Germany." All of these new articles are well and carefully done; Gurian's is exceptionally fine.

With the exception of the analytical study of "Antisemitism and Ourselves," by the late Z. Diesendruck, all the other articles have been revised and where possible brought up to date. In the process of revision, in at least one case, some dubious generalizations about the "democracy" of the present regime in Poland have crept into an otherwise expert historical study; since the individual authors have been left the explicit right of interpreting their materials, this is no indication of the general tone of the whole work.

It is the hope of Professor Baron, expressed in his Foreword to this volume, that the essays included "will promote the necessary understanding of the history and psychology of antisemitism by both Jews and non-Jews." Unquestionably they will, if sufficient circulation can be achieved to allow the essays to speak for themselves. It is only right to point out, however, that antisemitism is a disease of the emotions of our civilization and that an address to the intellect such as is contained in this volume can reach only the few. To write, to read, to praise essays of this type is good; but it is not a cure for antisemitism; that cure will require much more heroic measures.

J.L.B.

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